FEAR

HERE ARE TALES THAT WILL USHER YOU INTO

THE HAUNT OF FEAR®

AN ENTERTAINING COMIC

NO. 24 APRIL

10¢

I WAS *UPLIFTED* FROM THE *DEPTHS OF DESPAIR* BY THIS *REVEALING EXPERIENCE!* I *LAUGHED SO HARD* I ALMOST *BUST* THE *BINDING!* I WAS THE *CENTER OF ATTRACTION*... THE *STAR*. EVERYBODY WANTED TO *DANCE* WITH ME! I WAS *RUSNED!* SO *BE POPULAR* LIKE *ME!* WEAR *PANIC!* RUN DOWN AND GET *INTO* YOUR COPY AT YOUR *LOCAL NEWSSTAND*. IF YOU'RE THE *SHY TYPE* AND WOULD RATHER *DRESS AT HOME*, THEN YOU CAN *SUBSCRIBE* BY FILLING OUT THIS COUPON AND MAILING TO:

THE PANICKY EDITORS OF:
PANIC
ROOM 706
225 LAFAYETTE ST.
N.Y.C. 12, N.Y.

PLEASE SEND ME THE NEXT 8 ISSUES OF **PANIC** FOR WHICH I ENCLOSE ONE DOLLAR ($1.00)

NAME

ADDRESS

CITY ZONE STATE

Haunt of Fear, Mar.-Apr. 1954—Vol. 1, No. 24. Published Bi-Monthly by Fables Publishing Co., Inc., at 225 Lafayette St., New York 12, N. Y. William M. Gaines, Managing Editor. Albert B. Feldstein, Editor. Entered as second-class matter at the Post Office at New York, N. Y. Subscription 6 issues for $1 in the U. S. Elsewhere, $1.25. Entire contents copyrighted 1954 by Fables Publishing Co., Inc. Unsolicited manuscripts will not be returned unless accompanied by stamped return envelope. No similarity between any of the characters names or persons appearing in this magazine with any of those living or dead is intended and any similarity is purely coincidental. Printed in U.S.A.

THE WITCH'S CAULDRON!

HUNGRY, HIDIOTS? GOOO! THEN HOP INTO MY HAUNT OF FEAR AND I'LL FEED YOU A MOLOY MEAL OF MORBIOITY FROM MY PUTRIO PANTRY. HOW'S ABOUT A PORTION OF BE-BOP SEA FOOD...CRAZY MIXED-UP SQUIO? NO? THEN CUROLE UP A LITTLE CLOSER AND I'LL FEED YOU MY LATEST GHOUL-LASH...A SLURP STEW ABOUT MOUNTAIN MOONSHINE AND A CREEP WHO GUZZLED SO MUCH OF THE STUFF, HE ENDED UP A DRUNKEN DRIP. WHAT'S SO HORRIBLE ABOUT ENDING UP AS A DRIP, YOU ASK? WELL, OPEN YOUR SNEERING LITTLE SHOOTS AND YOU'LL SEE! I CALL THIS FOUL FARE..

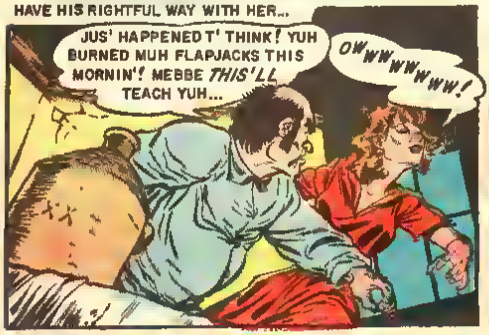
DRINK TO ME ONLY WITH THINE EYES...

NIGHT AFTER NIGHT, BETHY HAD WATCHED HER HUSBAND, JAKE WATSON, DRINK FROM THE BROWN EARTHENWARE JUG. JAKE WAS AN EXPERT WITH THE JUG FROM LONG YEARS OF DEVOTED PRACTICE, NEVER SPILLING A DROP OF THE PRECIOUS LIQUID. THE IGNITING FLUID HAD GURGLED ENDLESSLY DOWN HIS THROAT, AS IF HE'D HAD A THIRST THAT HE COULD NEVER QUENCH...

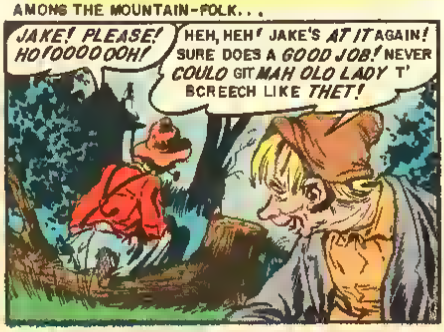
GLUK... GLUKK, GLUKKK..

HMMPH!

MORE OFTEN THAN NOT, FIRING HIS BLDDD, THE CHEAP MOUNTAIN SWILL WOULD BRING OUT THE BEAST IN JAKE. HE WOULD TURN ANGRY, BLOOD-SHOT EYES ON HIS WOMAN AND HAVE HIS RIGHTFUL WAY WITH HER...



TO THOSE PASSING BY, IT WAS NOTHING OUT OF THE ORDINARY. THE CRIES... THE THUDS OF HARD FISTS ON SOFT FLESH... WERE A TIME-HONORED CUSTOM AMONG THE MOUNTAIN-FOLK...



BETHY WOULD END UP BRUISED AND SORE, BARELY ABLE TO CRAWL INTO HER BED.

YET SHE'D NEVER KEPT THE JUG FROM HIM... NEVER TRIED TO HIDE IT OR CLAIM THEY COULDN'T AFFORD TO BUY MORE. IN FACT, LIKE A DUTIFUL WIFE, SHE'D ALWAYS PLIED HIM WITH THE SWILL, REGARDLESS OF THE CONSEQUENCES.

SOMETIMES THE LIQUOR WOULD HAVE THE OPPOSITE EFFECT ON JAKE, AND HE WOULD GRAB BETHY WITH A DIFFERENT OBJECTIVE...

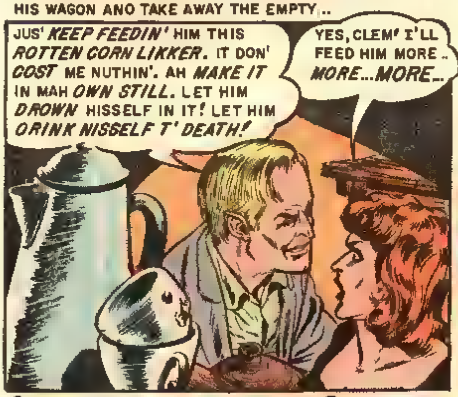
HIS URSINE ARMS WOULD ALMOST CRACK HER RIBS. HE WOULD PANT AND GASP, BREATHING HEAVY FUMES INTO HER FACE, AND MUMBLE HIS ANIMAL WANTS TO HER..

IT WAS THOSE TIMES THAT BETHY WOULD DREAD THE MOST. SHE ALMOST PREFERRED THE BEATINGS. SHE COULD HARDLY BEAR HIS SLOBBERING KISSES... HARDLY CHOKE DOWN HER UTTER LOATHING AND DISGUST... HER HATE...

BETHY DID NOT DARE RUN AWAY, FOR THERE WERE TIMES WHEN JAKE WOULD WIPE HIS THICK LIPS ACROSS HIS DIRTY SLEEVE AND THREATEN ..

BUT BETHY *NAD* 'FETCHED UP' WITH ANOTHER MAN . CLEM PARKER, THE MAN WHO SUPPLIED JAKE WITH HIS PRECIOUS MOONSHINE. BETHY AND CLEM HAD IT ALL FIGURED OUT. HE'D COME TO DELIVER HIS WARES DURING THE DAY, WHEN JAKE WAS AWAY.

CLEM WOULD HAND HER A FRESHLY FILLED JUG FROM HIS WAGON AND TAKE AWAY THE EMPTY ..



IT HAD BEEN A YEAR NOW, AND JAKE HAD SHOWN NO SIGNS OF WEAKENING UNDER THE RIVER OF BREW HE SWALLOWED EAGERLY ..

SO WHEN CLEM CAME ..

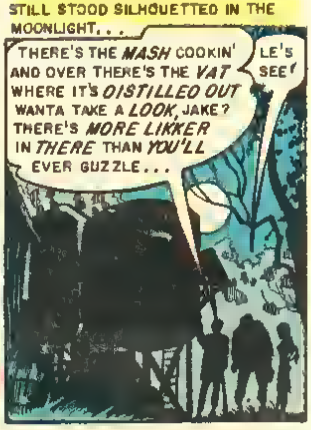
BETHY KNEW HOW TO GET JAKE TO THE STILL EASILY ENOUGH, SHE LIED

IT WAS A ROUGH TRAIL PAST THE FORK, THROUGH THE THORN-PATCH, UP OVER THE ROCKS TO THE STILL BACK OF SKUNK HILL. JAKE CURSED ALL THE WAY, BUT HIS THIRST MADE HIM GO FASTER... FASTER ..

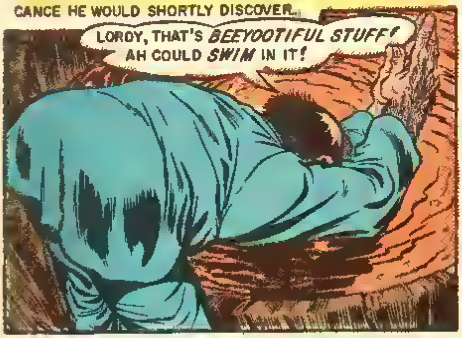
CLEM WAS WAITING, SHOT-GUN IN HAND...

JAKE LED HIS GUESTS INTO THE SHED, POINTED TO A ROW OF JUGS...

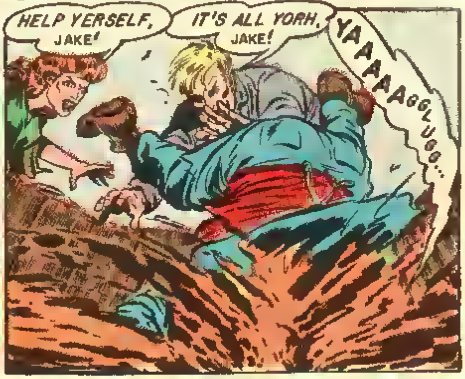
BEHIND THE SHED, IN A CLEARING, THE STILL STOOD SILHOUETTED IN THE MOONLIGHT...



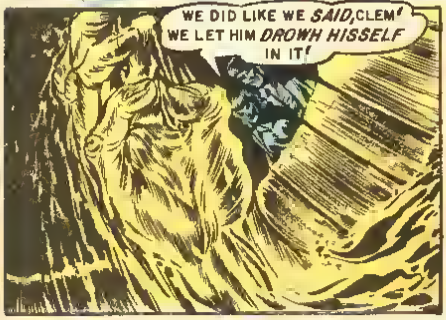
JAKE'S EYES GLEAMED GREEDILY AS HE STARED DOWN INTO THE BIG VAT FULL OF THE FIERY LIQUID HIS THROAT CRAVED. AND HE SPOKE WORDS WHICH HAD A SIGNIFICANCE HE WOULD SHORTLY DISCOVER...



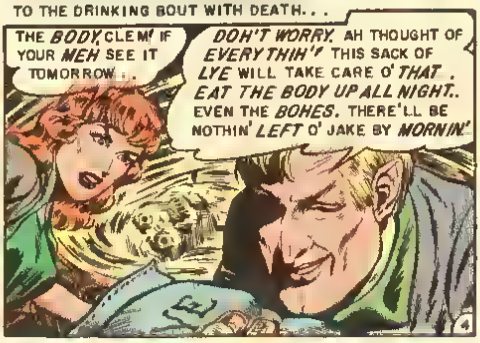
STRONG HANDS PUSHED JAKE OVER THE VAT BRIM.



JAKE STRUGGLED WILDLY, TRYING TO CLAW BACK UP THE SMOOTH SLIMY SIDES OF THE VAT... AS THE TWO LOVERS WATCHED AND LAUGHED. FINALLY HE SLIPPED, SCREAMING, BELOW THE BURNING SURFACE. ONCE, A HAND ERUPTED, CLUTCHING UP AT THE MOUNTAIN NIGHT...



THE HAND VANISHED. ONLY BUBBLES AROSE. JAKE HAD HIS FILL AT LAST... IN HIS THROAT... HIS STOMACH... HIS LUNGS. SOON, HIS BLOATED CORPSE ROSE TO THE SURFACE... BLOODSHOT EYES STARING... MUTE WITNESSES TO THE DRINKING BOUT WITH DEATH...



AFTER CLEM HAD POURED THE LYE INTO THE VAT, HE AND BETH WENT BACK TO THE SHED...

RUINS THAT BATCH OF *LIKKER*, BUT *AH DON' CARE!* I *GOT* WHAT I WANTED... BETHY

JAKE'S *GONE*, CLEM! I'M *YORE WOMAN NOW.* TAKE ME HOME..

CLEM SNATCHED A JUG FULL OF MOONSHINE, AND HE AND BETHY HURRIED, ARM AND ARM, TO THE CABIN WHERE JAKE WOULD DRINK NO MORE

COME INSIDE, CLEM! IT'S *YORE PLACE* NOW!

THET'S *RIGHT!* WE DON'T HAVE T' *WORRY* 'BOUT *JAKE* COMIN' HOME

LAUGHTER RANG OUT FROM WITHIN JAKE'S CABIN... GIGGLING PASSIONATE LAUGHTER, PUNCTUATED BY SWIGS OF MOONSHINE. WHILE OUT PAST SKUNK HILL, THE SILENCE OF THE GRAVE OVERHUNG THE DESERTED STILL... SILENCE BROKEN ONLY BY THE STEADY DRIP-DRIP FROM THE LOOSE SPIGOT OF THE VAT...

THE OOZING LIQUID DRIPPED EARTHWARD FORMING A PUDDLE IN THE SOIL BELOW THE VAT STANDING SILENTLY IN THE DESERTED MOUNTAIN CLEARING..

IT WAS A *STRANGE* PUDDLE.. *SLIMY* AND *VISCOUS*, IT DID NOT *SOAK INTO* THE DIRT AS AN *ORDINARY* LIQUID WOULD. IT *LAY* THERE...*SHIMMERING*...*QUIVERING*...AND THEN, TOWARD DAWN, IT *MOVED*...

IT MOVED AS IF IT WERE *ALIVE*...AS IF, PERHAPS, THE LYE, BY DISSOLVING LIVING TISSUE LONG IMPREGNATED AND NOW SUBMERGED IN A PRESERVATIVE ALCOHOL BATH, HAD *CREATED* A *LOATHSOME FORM OF CREEPING LIQUID LIFE*..

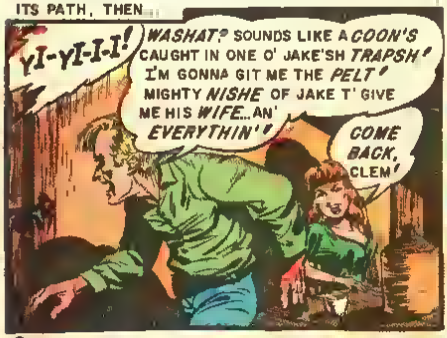
IT SLID AND SLURPED SLOWLY ALONG LIKE A HUGE SNAIL OR SLUG THAT HAD CRAWLED OUT FROM BENEATH SOME SLIMY ROCK. AND IT SEEMED TO HAVE A DESTINATION. IT LEFT THE CLEARING, CLIMBED OVER THE HILL, SLITHERED SMOOTHLY OVER THE ROCKS..

..THROUGH THE THORNY GROWTHS...PAST THE FORK.. AND ON TO THE HOUSE WHOSE LIGHTS STILL GLEAMED INTO THE COMING DAWN...

C'MON, BESKY! ISH *ALMOSH MORNIN'*. WE'VE *SHELEBRATED ALL NIGHT! NOW*, LESHA.

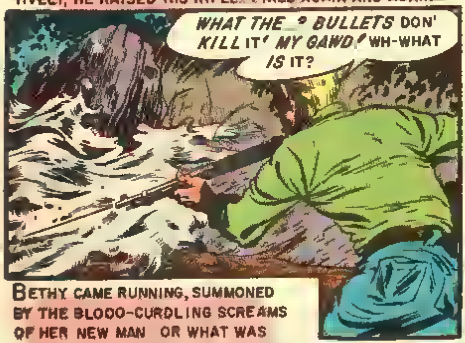
JUS' *ONE MORE DRINK*, CLEM!

THE CREEPING HORROR PAUSED OUTSIDE THE HOUSE WHERE THE DRUNKEN LAUGHTER OF A MAN AND A WOMAN ..*ITS* WOMAN..DRIFTED OUT, AND IT WAITED. IT WAITED PATIENTLY UNTIL WHAT IT NEEDED CROSSED ITS PATH, THEN...



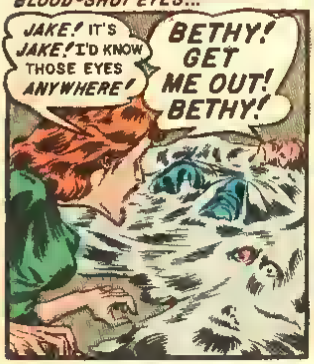
OUTSIDE, THE RACCOON'S SCREAMS DIED TO A GURGLING DEATH RATTLE. CLEM STUMBLED ABOUT IN THE GREY DAWN, SEARCHING FOR THE HIDDEN TRAP. AND THEN HE HEARD THE SOUND...BEHIND HIM... THE HORRIFYING GURGLING SLITHERING SOUND

CLEM WHIRLED...GASPED.. STOOD ROOTED IN PARALYZED TERROR AT WHAT HE SAW GLINTING IN THE DAWN'S LIGHT, QUIVERING LIKE JELLY SLITHERING TOWARD HIM. INSTINCTIVELY, HE RAISED HIS RIFLE.. FIRED AGAIN AND AGAIN...



THE RIFLE SLUGS TORE INTO THE FLESHY SLIME, SPATTERING DROPLETS WHICH QUICKLY REFORMED WITH THE MAIN BODY. BUT THE HOLES CLOSED BEHIND THE BULLETS WITH A SOFT SUCKING SOUND. THE THING DID NOT STOP..DID NOT EVEN SLOW DOWN. IT KEPT COMING! CLEM RAISED HIS FOOT TO STAMP AT IT AS IT FLOWED EAGERLY TOWARD HIS BOOTS. *THAT WAS HIS MISTAKE*..

BETHY CAME RUNNING, SUMMONED BY THE BLOOD-CURDLING SCREAMS OF HER NEW MAN OR WHAT WAS LEFT OF HIM. CLEM WAS HALF-GONE NOW, SINKING INTO THE SLIMY POOL. SHE LOOKED...HORRIFIED... AND THEN SHE SAW THE *TWO BLOOD-SHOT EYES*...



BETHY REACHED FOR HER MAN PULLED AT THE ONLY THING SHE COULD GRASP..CLEM'S HAIR

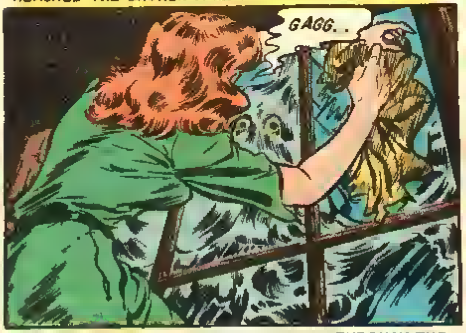
SHE FLUNG THE DRIPPING SCALP AT THE TWO EYES THAT GLARED BALEFULLY AT HER FROM THE SLIME. SHE TURNED AND STUMBLED BACK INTO THE CABIN, SLAMMING THE DOOR...

BUT SHE HAD NO TIME TO BE SICK, FOR THE CLOSED DOOR DID NOT SHUT OUT THE CREEPING FLUID HORROR...

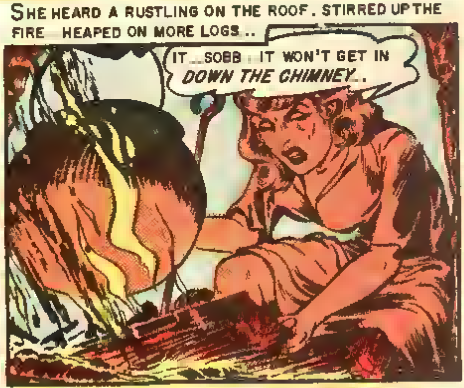
SHE LOOKED ABOUT WILDLY, TORE THE BLANKET FROM THE BED, AND STUFFED IT INTO THE DOOR CRACK...

FRANTICALLY, THEN, SHE SCURRIED ABOUT THE CABIN, STUFFING EACH CRACK, EACH CHINK THROUGH WHICH THE LIQUID MONSTROSITY MIGHT BE ABLE TO FLOW...

THE BLOODSHOT EYES BURNED AT HER THROUGH THE WINDOW, FLOWING UPWARD IN THE VISCOUS LIQUID. SHE REACHED THE BROKEN PANE JUST IN TIME..

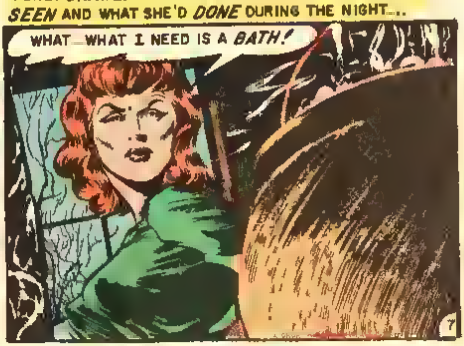


SHE HEARD A RUSTLING ON THE ROOF. STIRRED UP THE FIRE HEAPED ON MORE LOGS..



AN HOUR LATER, SUNLIGHT STREAMED IN THROUGH THE WINDOW. IT WAS MORNING. SHE'D SAT, HUDDLED IN MISERY, SICK, WAITING, AND NOW SHE'D WON. SHE'D KEPT OUT THE HIDEOUS REVOLTING FORM THAT WAS ONCE HER HUSBAND. HER COURAGE FLOWED BACK...

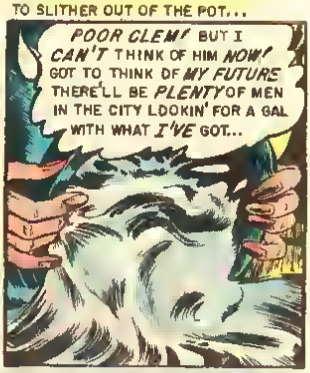
SHE LOOKED AT THE POT OF WATER HANGING BY THE FIREPLACE, STEAMING AND BUBBLING. SHE FELT SUDDENLY CRAWLY AND VILE AND DIRTY FROM WHAT SHE'D SEEN AND WHAT SHE'D DONE DURING THE NIGHT...



SHE POURED THE BOILING WATER INTO THE DENTED AND RUSTED METAL TANK SHE USED AS A BATH-TUB...

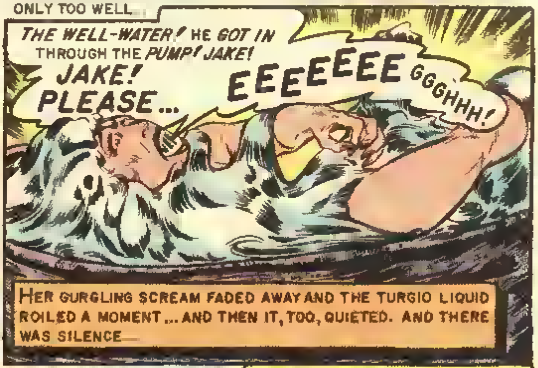
SHE PUMPED COLD WATER FROM THE SINK PUMP INTO THE EMPTIED POT...

...CARRIED IT TO THE TUB.. AND DUMPED IT IN. SHE NEVER NOTICED HOW IT POURED.. HOW IT SEEMED TO SLITHER OUT OF THE POT...



SHE SLIPPED OFF HER SHABBY DRESS... STEPPED INTO THE TUB... AND SCREAMED

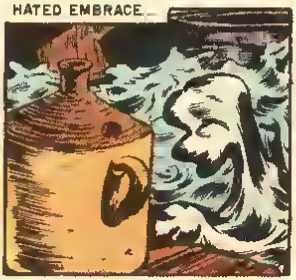
SHE FOUGHT WILDLY, SHRIEKING AT THE GHASTLY MALEVOLENCE THAT ENFOLDED HER IN ITS BURNING STICKY EMBRACE AND SLOWLY DRAGGED HER DOWN WITH A STRENGTH SHE HAD KNOWN BEFORE ONLY TOO WELL...



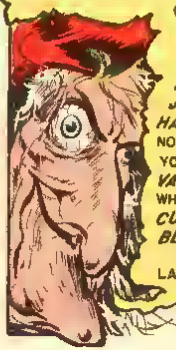
HER GURGLING SCREAM FADED AWAY AND THE TURGID LIQUID ROILED A MOMENT... AND THEN IT, TOO, QUIETED. AND THERE WAS SILENCE...

BUT NOT THE SILENCE OF DEATH! AND NOT THAT MERCIFUL FINALITY! TWO SMALL OBJECTS BOBBED TO THE SURFACE TO FLOAT BESIDE THE BLOOD-SHOT ONES...

AND AS THE SLITHERING LIQUID SUCKED OUT OF THE TUB, QUIVERED ACROSS THE CABIN FLOOR, AND REACHED A SHAPELESS BLOB-ARM UPWARD FOR THE BROWN EARTHENWARE JUG, BETHY KNEW THAT SHE COULD NEVER AGAIN ESCAPE JAKE'S HATED EMBRACE...



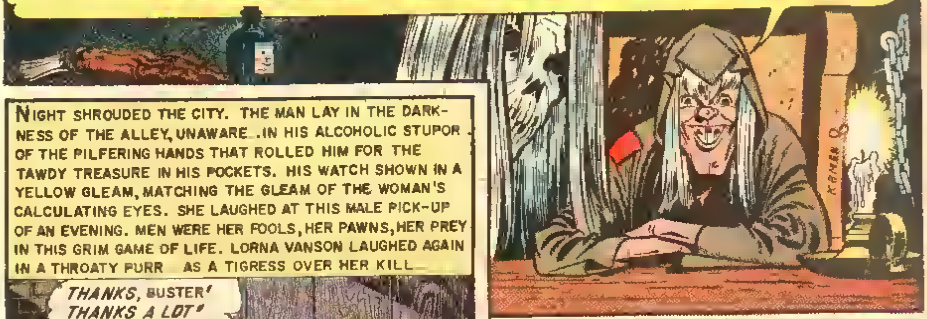
SO IF YOU'RE UP IN THE MOUNTAINS SOME NIGHT, KIDDIES, AND YOU HEAR A SLURPING RENDITION OF 'LITTLE BROWN JUG'... DUET, OF COURSE... YOU'LL KNOW WHO'S DOING THE GURGLING, BETHY AND JAKE... THE HAPPY CU-POOL! NOW, I'LL TURN YOU OVER TO THE VAULT-KEEPER, WHO'S WAITING TO CURDLE YOUR BLOOD. I'LL BE FEEDIN' YOU LATER. 'BYE, NOW!



THE VAULT OF HORROR!®

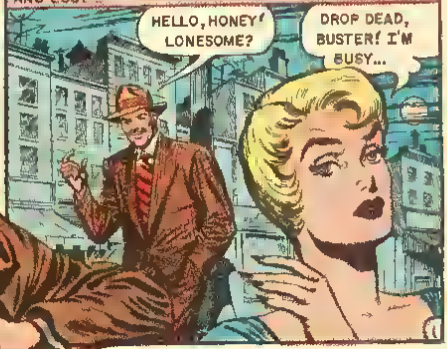
COME IN, CREEPS! IF YOUR *OLD MAN* WON'T COME ALONG, THEN *DROP DAD!* HEH, HEH! YEP IT'S YOUR *VAULT-KEEPER* AGAIN, INVITING YOU INTO *THE VAULT OF HORROR* FOR ANOTHER *REVOLTING READING* FROM MY *CRAWLY COLLECTION* OF *TERROR TOMES*. I CALL THIS *YELP-YARN*...

...ONLY SIN DEEP



NIGHT SHROUDED THE CITY. THE MAN LAY IN THE DARKNESS OF THE ALLEY, UNAWARE...IN HIS ALCOHOLIC STUPOR OF THE PILFERING HANDS THAT ROLLED HIM FOR THE TAWDY TREASURE IN HIS POCKETS. HIS WATCH SHOWN IN A YELLOW GLEAM, MATCHING THE GLEAM OF THE WOMAN'S CALCULATING EYES. SHE LAUGHED AT THIS MALE PICK-UP OF AN EVENING. MEN WERE HER FOOLS, HER PAWNS, HER PREY IN THIS GRIM GAME OF LIFE. LORNA VANSON LAUGHED AGAIN IN A THROATY PURR...AS A TIGRESS OVER HER KILL...

SHE MOVED THROUGH THE NIGHT, WEARIED OF HER PRECARIOUS OCCUPATION, SCHEMING OF BIGGER PREY. SHE HAD THE ONE THING THAT SOLD HIGH AMONG MEN... *BEAUTY*. BEAUTY TO DRIVE MEN WILD. INNOCENT, WIDE-EYED MADONNA BEAUTY...MASKING THE GREEDINESS BENEATH. BEAUTY THAT MADE MEN TURN AND LOOK AND LUST...



SHE WOULD HAVE NONE OF THEM NOW...NOT ANY MORE ...NOT IF SHE COULD SELL HER BEAUTY FOR WHAT IT WAS REALLY WORTH... AT IT'S HIGHEST PRICE...TO THE HIGHEST BIDDER. BUT BEAUTY LIKE HERS WAS NO GOOD HIDDEN IN RAGS, BURIED IN POVERTY, LIKE A JEWEL OBSCURED IN A DULL LEADEN SETTING...

WHAT I NEED IS A *STAKE*...FANCY CLOTHES...A BEAUTY SHOP TREATMENT...THE *WORKS!* AND *THIS WATCH* CAN *GET* IT FOR ME...

THE PAWNSHOP SHE FOUND WAS A HOLE IN THE WALL... MUSTY AND DECREPIT...AND ITS PROPRIETOR SEEMED JUST AS MUSTY AND DECREPIT AS HE RUBBED HIS GNARLED HANDS GREEDILY, TAKING HER OFFERING...ONLY TO TOSS IT BACK AT HER IN SCORN...

PNAH! WORTHLESS! IMITATION GOLD. IT BELONGS IN A *JUNKYARD.* OUT OF *PITY,* I'LL GIVE YOU A *DOLLAR* FOR IT!

A *DOLLAR!* IS *THAT* ALL?!

ALL HER DREAMS TUMBLED, EXPECTING SO MUCH MORE. SHE TURNED AWAY, HER LOVELY FACE TWISTED IN BITTER RAGE. BUT EVEN THAT DID NOT HIDE ITS CLASSIC PERFECTION. THE OLD PAWNBROKER CALLED HER BACK... HIS EYES NARROWING.

WAIT! YOUR *FACE!* LOVELY BROWN EYES... SPUN-SILVER HAIR... LURING LIPS. LISTEN. I HAVE A *PROPOSITION*...

AT *YOUR* AGE, GRANDPA? *SORRY.* I LIKE 'EM WITH *BOTH* FEET *OUT* OF THE GRAVE...

NO, NO, YOU LITTLE FOOL. YOU *MISUNDERSTAND.* *MY* ONLY MISTRESS IS *MONEY*...ALWAYS FAITHFUL AND TRUSTWORTHY. THIS IS *STRICTLY BUSINESS!* I OFFER YOU ONE THOUSAND DOLLARS FOR YOUR *BEAUTY.* IS IT A *BARGAIN?*

ONE THOUSAND... GULP... DID YOU SAY ONE THOUSAND DOLLARS?

SHE THOUGHT HIM MAD, BUT HE COUNTED OUT THE MONEY BEFORE HER EYES. THEN HE LED HER INTO THE BACK ROOM AND SEATED HER IN A CHAIR...

YOU MEAN... MMFF.. *ALL* YOU WANT IS THIS *WAX MOLD* OF MY FACE?

YES, MY DEAR CALL IT A *HOBBY* OF MINE... *CAPTURING BEAUTY LIKE YOURS...*

SHE DID NOT LIKE HIS FINAL CACKLING WORDS AS HE HANDED HER A PAWN TICKET, BUT SHE PUT IT DOWN TO THE FOLLIES OF THE AGED...

...IN CASE YOU EVER WISH TO *REDEEM* YOUR BEAUTY!

OLD FOOL...

SHE ABSENTLY STUCK THE TICKET INTO HER PURSE AS SHE LEFT THE FOOLISH OLD MAN'S SHOP...

BUT THE *LAUGH'S* ON *HIM,* I'VE GOT *ONE GRAND!* I'VE GOT MY *STAKE!*

LOA

EXCITING DAYS FOLLOWED FOR LORNA PREPARING THE LURE, THE SEDUCTIVE BAIT FOR THE HUNT TO FOLLOW. THE DEADLY FEMALE ON THE PROWL... THE OLDEST GAME IN HISTORY.

I'LL TAKE THIS DRESS, MADAM SONYA...

DO A GOOD JOB, EMILE.

NOW YOU'RE READY, BABY.

THE BORED DOORMAN OF THE SWANK CLUB 711 SWUNG OPEN A TAXI DOOR ONE EVENING. HE'D SEEN AN ENDLESS PARADE OF BEAUTIES TRAIPSE INTO THE CLUB DURING HIS YEARS AND NONE HAD RATED MORE THAN HALF A GLANCE TO HIS SATED EYES. BUT THAT NIGHT, HIS EYES SNAPPED WIDE...

GASP! A A *VISION!* I FEEL SORRY FOR THE *OTHER* DAMES INSIDE! THEIR EVENING IS *RUINED* THE MOMENT *THIS STUNNING BEAUTY MARCHES IN!*

HEADS TURNED AROUND AS LORNA WAS CONDUCTED TO A TABLE. WOMEN'S FACES FROZE... STILL SMILING... WITH HATE FLASHING BENEATH. HATE FOR THIS CREATURE WHO SUDDENLY TURNED THEM INTO BLOWSY FRUMPS IN COMPARISON.

MORE CHAMPAGNE, CHARLEY! ER... CHARLEY! *CHARLEY!*

OH, *SNUT UP*, LET ME *DRINK THAT IN!*

BUT LORNA IGNORED THEM ALL! HER PREY WAS PICKED... RONNIE ALTGELO III... BACHELOR PLAYBOY. HUMAN GOLD MINE. HE WAS ALWAYS THERE WITH HIS FOLLOWING OF UNCROWNED MISS AMERICAS. BUT LORNA WAS GLAD THEY WERE THERE. SHE NEEDED THEM, AS A COMEDIAN NEEDS A STRAIGHT MAN.

HEY! I *THOUGHT* I KNEW *EVERY* GEORGEOUS DOLL IN THIS TOWN. HOW DID I MISS *YOU*, BABY?

WHY, YOU.

SHE STRUCK HIM HARD... THIS MAN SHE WANTED TO WIN AND MARRY. SHE BRUISED HIS CHEEK AND LEFT THE DEEPER BRUISE OF ANGRY HUMILIATION INSIDE.

OWWW!

DESPICABLE WOLF.

BUT LORNA HAD PLAYED HER GAME WITH AGE-OLD SHREWDNESS... WITH WOMANLY WILE. FOR SHE KNEW THAT, TO MEN, THE *FORBIDDEN FRUIT* PROMISED ALWAYS THE *SWEETER TASTE...*

GET LOST, TRASH! I WANT TO MEET THAT *ANGEL!* NO *EARTHLY* GIRL COULD BE SO LOVELY!

HERE HE COMES *MY FOOL*... WAS THERE EVER ANY DOUBT?

IT TOOK LORNA SIX MONTHS OF HARD WORK. ALWAYS LEADING WITH HER *CHIN*... TO GET HER QUARRY PENNED. BUT AT LAST..

LORNA, HONEY! NO LIPS HAVE TASTED THE *SAME SINCE YOURS!* I *MUST* HAVE THEM FOR *MY OWN! FOR LIFE!* *MARRY ME!*

OH, RONNIE! YES! *YES, I'LL MARRY YOU!*

AND SO...WEDDING BELLS...THE HONEYMOON... AND LORNA MOVED INTO THE EARTHLY PARADISE SHE'D ALWAYS CRAVED... MISTRESS OF A MANSION FULL OF SERVANTS, WEALTH, AND LUXURIES. RONNIE, DEEPLY IN LOVE, SHOWERED HER WITH COSTLY GIFTS. AND LORNA LOVED DEEPLY IN RETURN. HIS *BANK ACCOUNT*, THAT IS...

OH, YOU *WONDERFUL, SWEET DARLING! BREATH OF SPRING MINK!* IT'S *BEAUTIFUL.*

IT'S THE *NEWEST SHADE* AND HERE'S SOMETHING *ELSE* TO GILD THE LILY... TROUBLE IS, EVEN *DIAMONDS* LOOK *CHEAP* AGAINST *YOUR RADIANT BEAUTY...*

SECURE IN THE LAP OF LUXURY, LORNA WINKED AT HER MIRROR EACH NIGHT. BUT ONE NIGHT SHE FROWNED... LOOKED AGAIN IN PERPLEXITY...THEN A THIRD TIME, IN WORRY...

LINES ON MY FACE! BUT THAT'S *IMPOSSIBLE!* I'M *YOUNG!* I'M ONLY TWENTY-THREE. OH... I SLEPT POORLY LAST NIGHT. IT MUST BE THAT. *TIRED* LINES. THEY'LL BE GONE TOMORROW...

BUT THEY WEREN'T GONE THE NEXT MORNING... OR THE NEXT...OR MANY NEXTS... UNTIL LORNA KNEW THAT SOMETHING *DREADFUL* WAS HAPPENING TO HER YOUTHFUL FACE. AND THE OLD SAYING CAME TO TORMENT HER... "BEAUTY IS ONLY SKIN DEEP"...

WORSE AND WORSE... ALMOST LIKE THE WRINKLES OF... OF *OLD AGE!* I'VE... I'VE GOT TO *HIDE* IT FROM RONNIE! THANK GOODNESS HE'S GOING *AWAY* FOR A FEW DAYS. I'LL BE ABLE TO SEE A *DOCTOR*...

WELL, HON! I'LL SEE YOU THURSDAY! I... HEY, AREN'T YOU *OVERDOING* THE ROUGE AND POWDER, LORNA? IT'S A *WASTE*, REALLY... WITH SUCH LOVELY, SMOOTH, PEACH-BLOSSOM SKIN LIKE YOURS... TO *HIDE* ITS *NATURAL BEAUTY!*

UH... I HAVE A *RED NOSE*, DEAR... THINK I'M COMING DOWN WITH A *COLD*... HAD YO *HIDE* IT...

AS SOON AS RONNIE LEFT, LORNA CALLED THE BEST SKIN MAN IN THE CITY

I'D LIKE TO *SEE* YOU, DOCTOR! YES! *TUESDAY MORNING? FINE!* I'LL *BE* THERE!

LORNA'S UNEASINESS FADED DURING THE EXAMINATION. MODERN SCIENCE COULD CURE ALMOST *ANY* ODD AFFLICTION. BUT WHEN THE DERMATOLOGIST TURNED WITH PUZZLED EYES, AND WHISPERED...

QUEER! SOMEHOW YOUR *FACIAL TISSUES* ARE *AGING*... AGING AT A MUCH *FASTER* RATE THAN YOUR *BODY*. YOUR SKIN IS... WELL... *DYING!*

THE *CURE*, YOU FOOL! I'M *RICH!* I'LL PAY *ANYTHING.*

HEAVILY VEILED, LORNA LEFT HIS OFFICE. HIS HELPLESS REPLY BOOMING LIKE A GONG OF DOOM IN HER MIND... OVER AND OVER...

NO CURE! NO CURE AT ALL! SCIENCE HAS *NEVER* BEEN ABLE TO *HALT THE AGING PROCESS. NO* DOCTOR CAN STOP YOUR SKIN FROM *DYING*...

WHY HAD THIS HAPPENED TO HER...HER OF ALL WOMEN? WHY? SUDDENLY, LORNA REMEMBERED THAT NIGHT...THAT NIGHT SO LONG AGO. FRANTICALLY SHE RUSHED HOME, SEARCHED AMONG HER PERSONAL ODDS AND ENDS, AND FINALLY FOUND IT..

The beauty of Lorna Larson lawfully pawned to Simeon Sykes, licensed Pawnbroker, redeemable at original price of $1,000.00 plus interest, in one year from Jan 13, 1953
Simeon Sykes

THAT OLD WRETCH... HIS FUNNY WAY OF SAYING IT... BUYING MY BEAUTY. AND THIS TICKET... MY BEAUTY PAWNED... REDEEMABLE... JUST AS IF HE REALLY TOOK IT AWAY SOMEHOW!

SHE PUSHED THE PAWNTICKET INTO HER PURSE AND HURRIED OUT INTO THE NIGHT...DOWN CRDOKED DESERTED STREETS ..

IT CAN'T BE! IT'S SILLY! BLACK MAGIC? YET, I HOPE IT'S TRUE! THEN I CAN REDEEM MY BEAUTY! LUCKY I KEPT THIS OLD PAWN TICKET! LET'S SEE.. HIS SHOP WAS AROUND HERE SOMEWHERE...

FINALLY, SHE FOUND THE DILAPIDATED OLD SHOP, TUGGED OPEN THE CREAKY DOOR, AND STUMBLED INTO ITS UNKEMPT MUSTY GLOOM, STILL PRESIDED OVER BY THE EVIL HUMAN SPIDER WHO HAD BARGAINED SO CUNNINGLY WITH HER A YEAR AND A MILLION DOLLARS AGO. SHE RIPPED OFF HER VEIL IN FURY, EXPOSING THE HIDEOUS MONSTROSITY THAT NOW REPOSED ON HER YOUNG LOVELY SHOULDERS...

DID YOU DO THIS TO ME, YOU FILTHY LITTLE OLD FOOL? DID YOU?

CERTAINLY, MY DEAR SEE? HERE'S YOUR BEAUTY.. AMONG MY PAWNED WARES.

HERE! HERE'S YOUR THOUSAND DOLLARS. I MUST HAVE MY BEAUTY BACK! I MUST...

BUT, MY DEAR! THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE! THE DATE! YOU FORGOT! THE FINAL DATE TO REDEEM WAS JANUARY 13TH! YESTERDAY! YOU'RE TOO LATE!

OF COURSE, YOU CAN BUY YOUR BEAUTY BACK! BUT AT MY PRICE, NOW! LET'S SEE! AS MRS RONALD ALTGELD III, YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO AFFORD LET'S SEE... $100,000!

WHAT?! $100,000?! HOW COULD I ASK MY HUSBAND FOR THAT MUCH OUT OF THE CLEAR BLUE SKY? BESIDES, IF HE SAW MY FACE NOW...

YES, HE'D DIVORCE YOU! HE'D TURN FROM YOUR HAG FACE AND BE SICK ON THE FLOOR AND KICK YOU OUT. SO, THINK IT OVER. BUSINESS IS BUSINESS! $100,000! NOT ONE CENT LESS! GOOD NIGHT

PLEASE... OH... PLEASE...

SHE STOOD OUTSIDE THE SHOP, SHIVERING IN THE COLD. AND THEN, SHE THOUGHT OF A WAY.. A DESPERATE WAY TO RAISE THE MONEY..

MY JEWELS.. MY MINK COATS.. ALL THE EXPENSIVE GIFTS FROM RONNIE. TOGETHER, THEY MIGHT TOTAL $100,000. I'LL TELL HIM WE WERE ROBBED...

HER FACE VEILED, HIDING THE HIDEOUS HAG-HORROR BENEATH, SHE WAS ABLE TO ENTER HER HOUSE ONLY BECAUSE THE SERVANTS RECOGNIZED HER YOUNG VOICE...

WHO DO YOU *THINK* IT IS, YOU FOOL? *STEP ASIDE!* I'M *GOING TO BED!* IF ANYBODY *CALLS*, I'M *ASLEEP*.

YES, MRS. ALTGELD!

IN THE SAFETY OF HER ROOM, WHERE SHE COULD LIFT THE STUFFY VEIL, SHE WASTED NO TIME IN PILING UP ALL SHE'D GAINED FROM HER HUSBAND'S GOLDEN GENEROSITY...

I HATE TO *PART* WITH THEM, BUT I *MUST* GET MY BEAUTY BACK BEFORE *RONNIE RETURNS* FROM HIS *TRIP!* I...

HEY! WHAT GOES *ON* HERE?

SHE'D HEARD HIS VOICE TOO LATE! RONNIE! HE'D RETURNED UNEXPECTEDLY. SHE'D HAD NO CHANCE TO TURN... TO RUN..TO HIDE FROM HIS EYES...

CHOKE...*ON, MY GOD!* THAT *FACE! UGLY...HORRISLE! WHO ARE YOU? WHAT ARE YOU DOING RIFLING MY WIFE'S ROOM?*

HOW COULD SHE REVEAL SHE WAS LORNA...HIS BEAUTIFUL WIFE? NO! THERE WAS *ANOTHER* WAY! LET HIM THINK HER A *BURGLAR! RUN!*...

NO YOU DON'T, SISTER! I'M *HOLDING YOU* FOR THE *POLICE*..

SHE STRUGGLED WITH HIM, REALIZING..

THE POLICE! OH, NO, NO, NO, NO! THEN I'LL BE TRAPPED IN JAIL.. NEVER PAY OFF THE PAWNBROKER... NEVER BE ABLE TO PROVE I'M LORNA ALTGELD! NO! THERE'S ONLY *ONE OTHER WAY...ONE LAST WAY*..

YES! ONE FINAL WAY ONE FINAL WAY... FOR *RONNIE!* LORNA REACHED FOR THE HEAVY BRASS STATUETTE...

SO THIS CHUMP HAS TO DIE! SO WHAT! THE *IMPORTANT* THING IS TO GET MY *BEAUTY* BACK.. MY *GOLDEN ASSET!* PLENTY OF *OTHER* RICH IDIOTS LIKE RONNIE AROUND TO BID FOR IT..

AGAIN AND AGAIN SHE SWUNG HER INSTRUMENT OF MURDER. RONNIE'S FIRST GROAN SANK TO A BUBBLING MOAN AND THEN FADED TO THE BELCHING GUSTS OF A FRESH CORPSE LOSING ITS FLUIDS AND GASES...

SHE LOOKED BACK AT THE STILL FIGURE ONLY ONCE, THEN LEFT BY THE WINDOW WITH ALL THAT REMAINED OF HIS FOOLISH LOVE PACKED IN A SUITCASE...

PERFECT! SIGNS OF A *STRUGGLE*... *ROOM LOOTED*... ALL ADDING UP TO *HOMICIDAL BURGLARY*... BY *PERSONS UNKNOWN*...

SHE HURRIED TO THE PAWNSHOP WITH HER TREASURE...

LOCKED! CLOSED FOR THE NIGHT! NOW I'LL HAVE TO WAIT UNTIL MORNING... FIND A HOTEL!

SHE SLEPT PEACEFULLY! WHY SHOULDN'T SHE? HER PROBLEM WAS SOLVED... HER TROUBLES ALMOST OVER. EARLY IN THE MORNING, SHE LEFT THE HOTEL, ALMOST GAYLY...

MORNIN' PAPER... READ ALL ABOUT THE MURDER! SERVANTS FIND BODY OF RONALD ALTGELD III...

THE *SERVANTS!* GASP...

SHE'D *FORGOTTEN* ABOUT THE SERVANTS. SHE SNATCHED A PAPER... STARED AT THE HEADLINES...

WANTED! FOR MURDER!
MRS. LORNA ALTGELD

IF YOU SEE THIS WOMAN, NOTIFY THE POLICE. SERVANTS HAVE TESTIFIED THAT MRS. ALTGELD RETURNED HOME LAST NIGHT MINUTES BEFORE HER HUSBAND, RONALD. THEY OBSERVED HER LEAVING THE HOUSE VIA THE BEDROOM WINDOW SHORTLY AFTER HIS DEATH. SHE IS KNOWN TO BE WEARING A HEAVY VEIL.

THE POLICEMAN STOOD BEHIND HER, READING OVER HER SHOULDER...

TOO BAD! PRETTY FACE, TOO! NOW, IT'S A *ONE WAY TICKET* TO THE *ELECTRIC*... ER... SAY... MA'AM! I'M *SORRY!* BUT... WELL... I *HAVE MY ORDERS*...

I *UNDERSTAND,* OFFICER! YOU WANT ME TO *REMOVE MY VEIL* SO YOU CAN BE SURE I'M NOT THAT... THAT *MURDERESS.*

LORNA LIFTED THE VEIL SLOWLY AND WATCHED AS THE POLICEMAN'S FACE PALED AND THEN GREW SICKLY GREEN AS HE CLAPPED HIS HAND TO HIS MOUTH...

SATISFIED... OFFICER...?

CHOKE...

AND SHE KNEW THAT SHE COULD *NEVER REDEEM HER BEAUTY NOW.* SHE KNEW THAT SHE WAS *STUCK* WITH THIS *HORRIBLE NAUSEATING HAG-FACE* FOR *ALL OF HER LIFE*... UNLESS SHE WANTED IT TO *END*... IN THE *ELECTRIC CHAIR*...

HEH, HEH! SO *LORNA* ENDED UP STUCK WITH A *DEAD PAN.* WELL, THERE'S MANY A *WIFE* WHO'LL SAY THE *SAME* ABOUT THEIR *HUSBANDS!* NOW IT'S TIME TO TURN YOU *BACK* TO THE *OLD WITCH* FOR ONE OF HER *IDIOTIC SLIME SERVINGS.* REMEMBER, IF YOU'RE *ADDICTED* TO *E.C. MAGS*... IF YOU'RE A *REAL GONE FAN*... THEN *YOU* OUGHT TO JOIN *THE E.C. FAN-ADDICT CLUB!* WHY? WELL... ER... THAT IS... ER... AH... HMMMM! LOOK, I'LL SEE YOU NEXT IN *MY* MAG, *THE VAULT OF HORROR!* 'BYE, NOW!

NEST EGG

Carty had warned him, but still it was a shock when Holloway opened the front door and silently stepped into the house he had come to rob. Carty had whispered that the old dump was bursting its seams, stuffed with junk the two brothers had been collecting frenziedly for forty years. Carty was right.

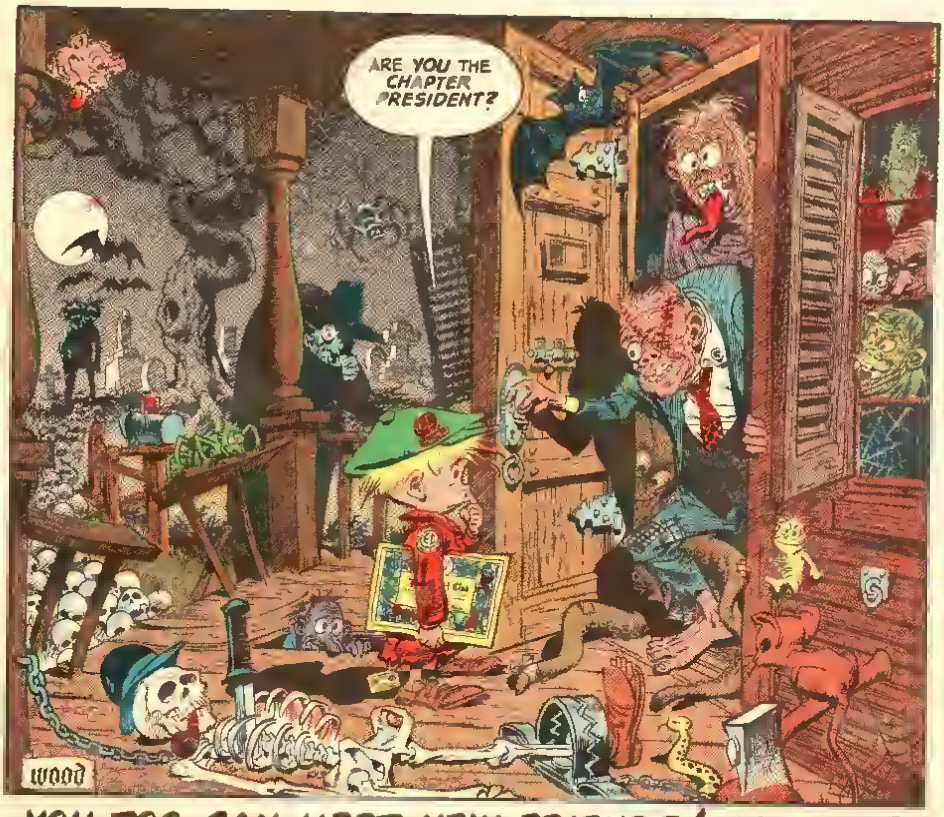
The entryway was so massed with piles of grimy, yellowing papers that Holloway had to slither sideways to get into the front room. Here, totting cardboard boxes were wedged tightly together, reaching from floor to dust-shrouded ceiling. The dining room was clogged with layers of rags matted into a wormy mass. The stench was the odor of decayed clothing stripped from a long-dead corpse.

Holloway wiped the bubbles of sour sweat from under his nose, thinking: *these cracked Cort brothers been holed up in this stinking mausoleum for forty years, and it don't look like they never even thrun out one dirty napkin in all that time!*

Squirming on, through what seemed like acres of putrid rubbish, Holloway finally saw the door with cracked paneling. *That's it!* he exulted, *That's the closet awright!* He sucked in a mouthful of foul air and held his breath, listening for the sound of approaching footsteps. The house was silent — the old crumbs must be upstairs, snoozing among the garbage on the second floor. Carty was right, so far!

Holloway turned the doorknob and eased it open. He slipped into the murky closet, tense until he heard the knob click shut solidly behind him. The tiny cubicle was stifling and musty, and the walls felt clammy under his fingertips, but it was worth it. Twenty-five thousand bucks was stashed away here, Carty had said. This is where the old misers had buried their lousy dough!

A minute later, his eyes beginning to pick out the fuzzed outline of objects in the closet, Holloway started to probe through the boxes piled in clogged profusion on all sides. Carty had warned him to be careful, Holloway remembered as he searched sagging boxes and folds of wormy cloth. The place might be alive with *rats!* There was only one box left now — the big one on the floor at his feet. He fought down the revulsion he was beginning to feel, and dug into strips of mouldering fabric. Their nest-egg got to be in *here*, Holloway thought, his heart hammering so hard that he felt the pressure in his ears. He scooped up a handful of rotting cloth and hurled it to one side with a shudder. And then it hit him, like a swarm of bees. Only it was *moths*... thousands of them, all at once. He staggered backwards, his hand groping for the doorknob. He tasted the dry-dustiness of their wings in his mouth, the twitching of the moths' oozy bodies as they fluttered against his eyelids. His fingers circled the knob and wrenched: the door was locked! Holloway shrieked, once. That was all the time he had before the frantic whirring drowned out all sound.. the writhing, powdery bodies blocked all vision. He felt his stomach knotting as he tried to gulp air, but it was no use. A generation of moths had hatched undisturbed in the miserable closet — by the thousands, now, they were blocking the passages of his nose, forcing their way into his gaping mouth and down his gagging throat. Then, when he had stopped writhing — when his last scream had strangled in his throat — they went to work on the delicious shreds of clothing which had been Holloway's suit just minutes before.



YOU, TOO, CAN MEET NEW FRIENDS! JOIN THE E.C. FAN-ADDICT CLUB!

SEND FOR *YOUR MEMBERSHIP KIT* TODAY RECEIVE A FULL-COLOR 7½ X 10½ ILLUMINATED *CERTIFICATE*, A STURDY WALLET *IDENTIFICATION CARD*, A SNAZZY EMBROIDERED *SHOULDER PATCH*, AND A STUNNING ANTIQUE BRONZE-FINISH BAS-RELIEF *PIN*.

* * * * *

FOR AN *INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP*, FILL OUT THE COUPON AND SEND IT IN, TOGETHER WITH 25¢ IF *FIVE* OR *MORE* OF YOU WISH TO JOIN AS AN *AUTHORIZED CHAPTER*, ENCLOSE *EACH* MEMBER'S NAME AND ADDRESS ALONG WITH 25¢ FOR *EACH NAME*, AND INDICATE THE *NAME* OF THE *ELECTED CHAPTER PRESIDENT*. WE WILL NOTIFY *EACH PRESIDENT* OF HIS *CHAPTER NUMBER*. *EACH* MEMBER, *CHAPTER* OR *INDIVIDUAL*, WILL RECEIVE HIS KIT *DIRECTLY*... BY RETURN MAIL!

THE E C FAN-ADDICT CLUB
ROOM 706
225 LAFAYETTE STREET
NEW YORK, 12, N.Y.

Here's my two bits! I want the things and stuff like the kid's wearing! I want to meet new friends like the kid's meeting! I'm a fan addict! I'm mad!

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ ZONE NO. ____

STATE _____

THE OLD WITCH'S NICHE

Hummmph! Just because they're being sued, I gotta lose part of my column this issue! So now let me turn you over to my two criminal editors, who'll try and worm their way out of this one! Talk fast, boys!

* * * * *

Yep, bless her ice-cube heart, the old gal is right! As of this writing, E C. is being sued! And of all things, we've been accused of attempting (in the words of the papers served upon us by Gilberton Company, Inc., Albert L. Kanter, President, in seeking a preliminary injunction) to ". . . intentionally, unfairly and unlawfully adopt, copy and imitate the title and style and format of the art work of plaintiff's said periodical 'Classics Illustrated'. . ."!

The magazine that the Gilberton Company claims is an imitation of "Classics Illustrated" is none other than our own "Three Dimensional E.C. Classics." Mr. Kanter's attorneys go on to allege that ". . . In so using the word 'classics' and in adopting the same style, size and format for defendants' first issue of their magazine, defendants (E.C.) adopted such title, size and format in bad faith and with an intent and tendency (a) to deceive and mislead the trade and public in general; (b) to pass off their magazine as the work and property of the plaintiff, (c) to appropriate for themselves the plaintiff's title, reputation, trade name and good will; and (d) to convey to the members of the trade and of the reading public the misleading impression that defendants' (E C 's) said magazine was in fact one of the numbers of the plaintiff's (Gilberton's) prior established periodical, 'Classics Illustrated'. "

In Mr. Kanter's own words from his sworn affidavit: " . . . the attempt to pass off defendants' magazine as plaintiff's periodical is self-evident."

William M. Gaines, in his seventeen page answering affidavit (of which only a small portion can be reproduced here due to space limitations) stated, " . . . Before meeting and disposing of the plaintiff's untoward and unfounded criticisms, I herewith emphatically and categorically deny that the title of our book, 'Three Dimensional E C Classics,' its cover or any of its art work was intentionally chosen, conceived of or created so as to simulate the appearance of the plaintiff's 'Classics Illustrated.' Until the plaintiff registered its complaint with me . . . , it never occured to me that there was any peril of our 'comic' book in question being mistaken for the plaintiff's. The receipt of that complaint momentarily concerned me, not because of a fear of unwitting wrongdoing on my part, but rather because the last thing I could possibly desire —and I'm not being facetious—would be for anyone to identify our book as one of the plaintiff's.

". . . Manifestly, the defendants (E C) have neither the intention nor the desire to have their books confused with the plaintiff's.

". . . The plaintiff has professed that its books are 'acceptable,' snidely insinuating that the defendants' are not. It is perhaps true that the readers of the plaintiff's (Gilberton's) books do not purchase the defendants' (E.C.'s) products. It is equally true that 'Classics Illustrated' is not 'acceptable' to our readers.

" . . . I respectfully pray that their motion for a preliminary injunction be denied."

* * * * *

It was!—ed.

* * * * *

O.K. you old bag . . . take it away! You may have the *last two inches!*

Hee, hee! You may be laughing out of the other sides of your mouths, come the trial! And my two inches just leaves me enough room for the commercials: E C 's 3-D mags, the nefarious and infamous THREE DIMENSIONAL E C CLASSICS, as well as the more innocuous THREE DIMENSIONAL TALES FROM THE CRYPT OF TERROR are still available by mail order 15¢ each, 2 for 30¢! A subscription to this mag will set you back one buck for eight issues. The address for 3-D orders, sub orders, fan-mail, and legal advice is:

The Old Witch
Room 706, Dept. Lawsuit
225 Lafayette Street
N Y C 12, N Y

YOU'LL BE HORRIFIED ALONG WITH THEODORE WHEN HE DISCOVERS

The SECRET

THEY'RE TALKING ABOUT ME AGAIN. MISS HEATHER AND MISS GRAVES...THE ORPHAN ASYLUM MATRONS. AT NIGHT WHEN THE OTHER KIDS ARE ASLEEP, I SNEAK DOWN AND LISTEN. I'M SCARED COMING THROUGH THE DARK HALLWAY AND DOWN THE STAIRS. SOME OF THE STEPS CREAK. I KNOW WHERE TO WALK SO THEY DON'T, ONLY SOMETIMES I FORGET TO STEP IN THE RIGHT PLACE AND THE CREAK SOUNDS LIKE SOMEONE SCREAMING. SOME NIGHTS IT'S WINDY AND THE SHUTTERS BANG AND I WANT TO SCREAM TOO, ONLY I HOLD IT IN, BECAUSE I WANT TO KNOW. I WANT TO KNOW WHY NOBODY'S EVER ADOPTED ME AND TAKEN ME HOME WITH THEM. I WANT TO KNOW THE SECRET.

HE'S ALMOST *THIRTEEN*, MISS GRAVES! YOU *KNOW* HOW DIFFICULT IT IS GETTING THEM ADOPTED ONCE THEY REACH THEIR *TEENS!*

AND THAT..THAT MEANS HE'LL BE *WITH US* UNTIL HE TURNS *EIGHTEEN!* OH.. WHAT WILL WE *DO*, MISS HEATHER?

I USED TO THINK IT WAS BECAUSE THEY *LIKED* ME THAT THEY KEPT ME HERE AT THE ORPHANAGE. I USED TO THINK THEY *WANTED* ME FOR THEIR *VERY OWN*...

HE'S REACHING *MATURITY*, MISS GRAVES! WE'VE *GOT* TO GET HIM OFF OUR HANDS! DON'T YOU *SEE?*

I..I *UNDERSTAND*, MISS HEATHER I'LL START DOING EVERYTHING I *CAN* TO *ENCOURAGE* HIS ADOPTION.

BUT WHEN THEY STARTED TREATING ME BAD...WHEN THEY STARTED LOCKING ME IN THE ROOM...WHEN THEY STARTED WHISPERING ABOUT ME, I *KNEW* THERE WAS A SECRET...

..AND YOU'LL *FORGET* ABOUT THE...THE..

IT WILL BE *OUR SECRET*, MISS HEATHER!

IT ALWAYS KEEPS ME AWAKE AFTER I HEAR THEM TALKING. I GO BACK TO THE DORM AND I LIE ON MY BED AND I THINK HARD ABOUT WHAT THEY SAID AND TRY TO MAKE THE SECRET COME OUT OF IT. BUT I CAN'T. SO I PRETEND I *KNOW* WHAT IT IS..

I'VE GOT A *REAL* MOM AND DAD SOMEWHERE! *THAT'S* IT! AND SOME DAY THEY MIGHT *COME* FOR ME AND TAKE ME TO A *REAL* HOME...

BUT NOW MISS HEATHER AND MISS GRAVES AREN'T GOING TO TELL ANYBODY... THEY WANT TO PUT ME UP FOR ADOPTION AND KEEP IT A SECRET. AND ALL BECAUSE I GET BAD ONCE IN A WHILE, AND THEY HAVE TO LOCK ME IN THE ROOM...

MAYBE... MAYBE IF I PROMISE *NEVER TO RUN AWAY AGAIN!* MAYBE IF I PROMISE TO BE *GOOD*.. AND *WORK* AROUND THE HOME... AND *FIX* THINGS WHEN THEY BREAK.. MAYBE THEY'LL *LET ME STAY* UNTIL MY *REAL* MOM AND DAD COME!

I DON'T MIND LIVING IN THE ORPHAN ASYLUM. MISS GRAVES AND MISS HEATHER ARE OKAY EXCEPT WHEN THEY GET MAD. THEY GET MAD AT ME WHEN I START COMPLAINING. BUT *GEE*... I'M *BIGGER* THAN MOST OF THE OTHER KIDS. I *NEED* MORE...

...*FOOD*, MISS GRAVES! *I'M HUNGRY!*

MISS HEATHER! HE'S *COMPLAINING* AGAIN. HE'S *HUNGRY*.

COME WITH ME, THEODORE.

THEY ALWAYS LOCK ME IN THE ROOM WHEN I COMPLAIN. IT'S A LITTLE ROOM WITH NOTHING IN IT 'CEPT A BED. AND IT'S LONESOME IN THE ROOM.

PLEASE, MISS HEATHER! *DON'T LOCK ME IN! I'LL BE GOOD!* I CAN'T *HELP IT* IF I'M *HUNGRY! PLEASE...*

SHUT UP, THEODORE! YOU'RE *DISTURBING* THE *OTHER CHILDREN!*

AFTER A WHILE, I CAN'T STAND IT IN THE LITTLE ROOM ANYMORE. SO I CLIMB OUT OF THE WINDOW AND SLIDE DOWN THE DRAINPIPE...

AND I RUN AWAY...

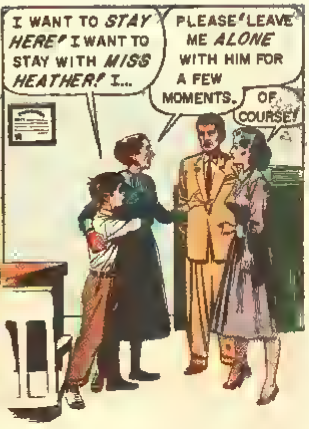
THERE HE *GOES* AGAIN! OH, IF HE'D ONLY LEAVE FOR *GOOD!*

HE'LL BE BACK, MISS GRAVES. THE *ONLY SOLUTION* IS *ADOPTION*.

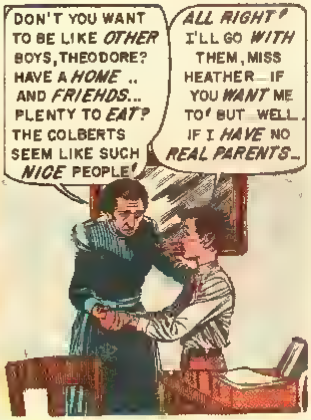
WHEN I COME BACK, MISS HEATHER IS ALWAYS WAITING FOR ME. SHE DOESN'T GET MAD. SHE JUSTS TAKES ME BACK UP TO THE LITTLE ROOM AND MAKES ME GO TO BED AGAIN. SHE EVEN LETS ME SLEEP LATE. BUT NOT THIS MORNING...

NUN? *GO WASH UP* AND *COMB YOUR HAIR* AND *DRESS NEATLY*. THEN COME DOWNSTAIRS TO MY OFFICE.

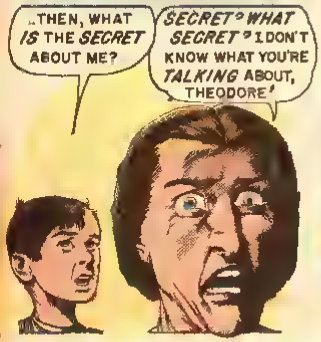
I'M SCARED ABOUT GOING DOWN TO THE OFFICE. MISS HEATHER ALWAYS *YELLS* AT ME WHEN SHE SENDS FOR ME TO COME TO HER OFFICE. BUT THIS TIME, SHE *SMILES* AT ME—



MISS HEATHER GETS ANGRY AT ME SOMETIMES, BUT NEVER LIKE THIS. HER FACE GETS ALL RED AND HER EYES BULGE AND SHE GRABS MY ARM TIGHT AND SHE SHAKES ME—

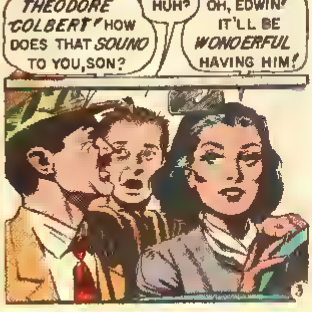


I KNOW MISS HEATHER WON'T YELL AT ME OR PUNISH ME FOR LISTENING OUTSIDE HER OFFICE NOW, SO I'M NOT SCARED TO ASK..

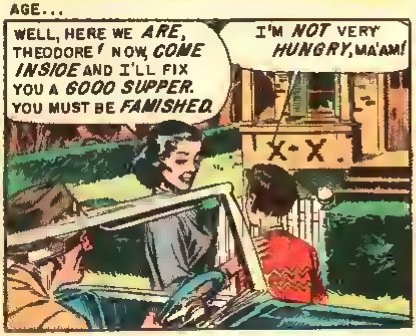


I FEEL ALL COLD AND SHAKY LEAVING THE HOME. I FEEL BAD THE WAY MISS HEATHER MAKES A FACE WHEN I KISS HER GOODBYE, LIKE IT MAKES HER *SICK* FOR ME TO KISS HER...

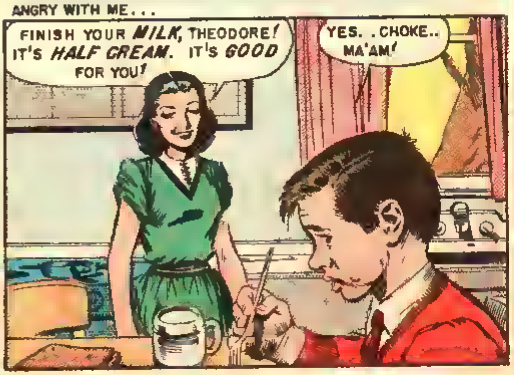
THE COLBERTS KEEP TALKING ABOUT NICE THINGS ON THE WAY TO MY NEW HOME, BUT I JUST THINK ABOUT THE SECRET.. AND HOW MAYBE NOW I'LL NEVER FIND OUT WHAT IT WAS



IT'S A LONG TRIP TO WHERE MY NEW PARENTS LIVE AND I DON'T FEEL GOOD ABOUT MY NEW HOME. IT LOOKS SO LONESOME, AND I DON'T HEAR ANY KIDS LAUGHING AND PLAYING LIKE BACK AT THE ORPHANAGE...



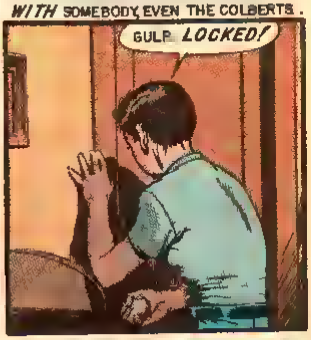
MRS COLBERT...ER, MOM...FUSSES ABOUT IN THE KITCHEN AND MAKES ME A BIG SUPPER. I TRY TO EAT SO SHE WON'T BE ANGRY WITH ME...



THEY MAKE ME EAT. THEY STAND OVER ME UNTIL I FINISH EVERY LAST DROP. I FEEL ALL SICK INSIDE...

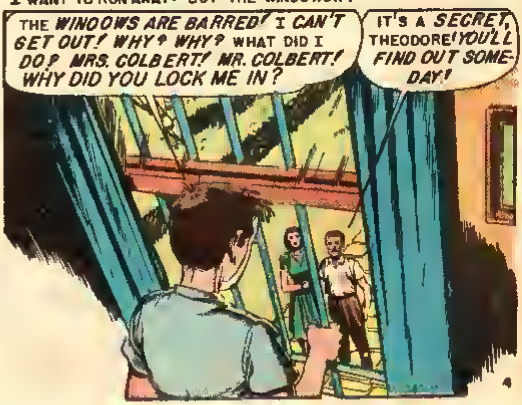
AFTER SUPPER THEY TAKE ME UPSTAIRS TO MY ROOM...

OUTSIDE, IT'S DARK AND QUIET! THERE ARE NO HOUSES FOR MILES. NOTHING BUT WOODS. I'M SCARED AND LONESOME. I WANT TO BE WITH SOMEBODY, EVEN THE COLBERTS.



THEY'VE LOCKED ME IN! THEY'VE LOCKED ME IN MY ROOM JUST LIKE MISS HEATHER USED TO DO WHEN SHE WAS ANGRY WITH ME...

I WANT TO RUN AWAY! BUT THE WINDOWS...



THEY *KEEP* ME LOCKED UP IN MY ROOM... EVERY FEW HOURS, MRS. COLBERT COMES IN WITH A TRAY OF FOOD...

EAT IT, THEODORE! EAT IT *ALL UP!*

WHY DO YOU KEEP ME *LOCKED UP*, MA'AM? WHY WON'T YOU LET ME GO OUT AND *PLAY?*

IT'S A *SECRET*, THEODORE! BUT FIRST, WE HAVE TO *BUILD YOU UP*...GET YOU *NICE* AND *STRONG* AND *HEALTHY!*

AND *THEN YOU'LL TELL ME?*

THEN YOU'LL *FIND OUT*, THEODORE! NOW, *EAT! FINISH EVERY DROP!*

YES MA'AM!

I NEVER THOUGHT I'D GET *TOO MUCH* TO EAT. BACK AT THE ORPHAN ASYLUM, I USED TO GET *HUNGRY* ALL THE TIME. BUT *NOW*, I GET *MORE* THAN ENOUGH...

FOUR FRIED EGGS! I COULD *NEVER* EAT THAT MUCH!

OF *COURSE* YOU CAN, THEODORE! AND DRINK YOUR *MILK, TOO!* IT'LL MAKE YOU *BIG* AND *STRONG*... GIVE YOU *GOOD RICH BLOOD*..

IF YOU'D JUST LET ME *GO OUT* AND *PLAY*... INSTEAD OF KEEPING ME *LOCKED IN* LIKE THIS, MAYBE I COULD *DEVELOP* AN *APPETITE!*

WE *CAN'T* HAVE YOU *RUNNING AROUND LOSING WEIGHT*, THEODORE! YOU WERE *TERRIBLY RUN-DOWN* WHEN WE TOOK YOU FROM THE ORPHANAGE. WHY, YOU'RE JUST *BEGINNING* TO LOOK *HALF-WAY DECENT!*

AND ALL THE TIME THAT I'M LOCKED IN MY ROOM...WHEN MOM COLBERT ISN'T STUFFING FOOD INTO ME... I THINK ABOUT THE SECRET. I WONDER WHAT IT IS...

BED TIME, THEODORE! YOU MUST GET *PLENTY* OF *SLEEP*. BUT *FIRST*, DRINK THIS *CHOCOLATE MILK!* IT HAS *TWO RAW EGGS IN IT!*

YES, MA'AM

I GUESS THEY'RE JUST TRYING TO BE GOOD TO ME. I'D BE HAPPY ABOUT IT, TOO, IF THEY DIDN'T KEEP ME LOCKED UP ALL THE TIME...

THAT'S A *GOOD BOY!*

WHAT'S THE *SECRET*, MA'AM? *TELL ME*, PLEASE!

YOU'LL FIND OUT, THEODORE... *VERY SOON, NOW!*

I *KNOW* THE SECRET *NOW!* IT'S BEEN A *MONTH* SINCE MR. AND MRS. COLBERT TOOK ME FROM THE ORPHAN ASYLUM AND BROUGHT ME HERE AND LOCKED ME UP IN THIS ROOM. AND NOW I *KNOW* THE SECRET. I HEAR THEM COMING UP THE STAIRS..

I WAS *HOPING* YOU'D WANT TO TELL HIM *TONIGHT*, EDWIN! I DON'T THINK I COULD HAVE *WAITED* ANOTHER DAY!

THE SECRET! THEY'RE COMING TO *TELL* IT TO ME. BUT I *KNOW* IT! I KNOW IT *ALREADY*. I HEAR FOOTSTEPS OUTSIDE MY DOOR... A KEY SCRAPING IN THE LOCK...

THEODORE? ARE YOU *ASLEEP?* WE HAVE SOMETHING TO *TELL* YOU!

I... I *KNOW IT*, MOM... DAD! I *KNOW* THE SECRET...

YOU'RE JUST *RIGHT*, NOW, THEODORE! *JUST RIGHT!* YOU'RE *FAT* AND *FULL OF RICH RED BLOOD.*

BLOOD TO DRINK!

THAT'S OUR SECRET, THEODORE! *WE'RE VAMPIRES!*

THEY STAND THERE, DROOLING, THEIR FANGS BARED, STARING AT ME, STARING INTO THE SHADOWS WHERE I COWER.

ISN'T THAT A *NICE* SECRET, THEODORE? *THEODORE? COME OUT*, THEODORE!

IT'S NO USE *SCREAMING*, THEODORE! THERE ISN'T A HOUSE FOR *MILES!*

ONLY I WAS *WRONG! THEIR SECRET... MOM AND DAD COLBERT'S... THEIR SECRET* ISN'T *MY SECRET*. I PAD FORWARD SOFTLY

EDWIN! CHOKE! *LOOK!* *GOOD LORD!*

NOW I *KNOW* WHY I USED TO GET *HUNGRY* WHEN THE *MOON WAS FULL* AND SHONE LIKE SILVER ON THE ORPHANAGE LAWN AND MISS HEATHER USED TO LOCK ME IN THE LITTLE ROOM. I *SPRING* AT THEM... *RIPPING, TEARING, SLASHING*... LIKE I *USED* TO DO WHEN I'D *RUN AWAY*...

EEEEEEEAAARRRGH!

THAT IS THE *SECRET*... *MY SECRET*... I KNOW NOW THAT *I AM A FLESH-HUNGRY, FERDCIOUS, LOATHSOME WEREWOLF*...

HEE, HEE! DELICIOUS LITTLE TIDBIT, EH? AND IF *YOU DON'T THINK* THAT A *YOUNG WOLF* CAN *TAKE CARE* OF *TWO GROWN-UPS*, LET ME TELL YOU ABOUT THESE *TWO OLD MAIDS!* SEEMS THIS YOUNG... *AH*... BUT THAT'S A *DIFFERENT STORY*. WE'LL SAVE *THAT* ONE FOR *ANOTHER* DIME! NOW, I'LL TURN YOU OVER TO *C.K.*, WHO'S WAITING TO *WIND UP* MY *MUCK MAG* WITH A TALE FROM HIS COLLECTION IN THE *CRYPT*. I'LL BE COOKING UP *MORE* OF THIS CREEP *WHEN*... AS *ONE STEER* SAID TO THE *OTHER* AS THEY *ENTERED* THE *SLAUGHTER HOUSE*.. *'NEXT, WE MEAT!'* 'BYE, NOW... E C, THAT IS!

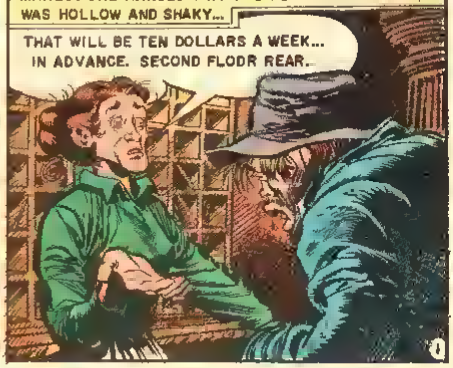
THE CRYPT OF TERROR

HEH, HEH! AND NOW IT'S TIME FOR YOUR *CRYPT-KEEPER* TO *WIND UP* THE *OLD HAG'S MAG* WITH A *SLIMY SELECTION* FROM *MY COLLECTION* OF *TERROR-TOMES* HERE IN THE *CRYPT*. SO *CREEP IN*, CUDDLE UP ON THAT *SUITCASE*, AND I'LL *GRIP* YOU WITH THE *BRIEF CASE* OF MORBIDITY I CALL...

HEAD-ROOM!

LOLA PEDERSON STOOD BEHIND THE SMALL PITTED DESK OF HER FLEABAG HOTEL AND WATCHED HER LATEST GUEST SCRAWL AN ILLEGIBLE SIGNATURE IN THE REGISTER. OUTSIDE, A QUIET MIST CREPT AROUND THE HOTEL LIKE A STEALTHY GREY CAT, AND THERE WAS NO SOUND SAVE THE SCRATCHING OF THE PEN IN HIS LARGE HAIRY PAW AND THE REGULAR ANIMAL GRUNT OF HIS HEAVY BREATHING. LOLA SHIVERED. SHE WAS SUDDENLY AWARE, FOR THE FIRST TIME, OF THE DANK, FETID REEK OF ROTTED WOOD IN THE ANCIENT LOBBY, BUT THERE WAS SOMETHING MORE. THERE WAS A SUBTLE NAUSEATING AURA THAT SEEMED TO COME FROM THE MAN HIMSELF.

LOLA TRIED NOT TO LOOK AT HIM, BUT HER GAZE WAS HELD BY A MORBID FASCINATION. HE WAS UGLY BEYOND DESCRIPTION, A REVOLTING FIGURE OF EVIL WITH A FACE THAT NO HOLLYWOOD MAKE-UP MAN COULD EVER DREAM UP EVEN IN HIS WORST NIGHTMARES. SHE HANDED HIM THE KEY AND HER VOICE WAS HOLLOW AND SHAKY...



SHE SHUDDERED AS HE TODK THE KEY AND DRDPPED THE TEN DDLLAR BILL ON THE DESK. THE THOUGHT OF TOUCHING HIS MONEY MADE HER FLESH CREEP. HE TURNED AND STARTED UP THE STAIRS...

DON'T FORGET. YOU *MUST BE OUT* BY *SIX* EVERY NIGHT.

SHE LISTENED TO HIS GRUNT OF AGREEMENT AND THE MUFFLED ECHD OF HIS FOOTFALLS FADING AWAY ALDNG THE UPSTAIRS HALL..

THAT'S .CHOKE.. THE *VILEST, NOST HIDEOUS FACE* I'VE *EVER SEEN.* I *NEVER* SHOULD HAVE LET HIM *HAVE* THE ROOM. WHAT WILL *OTTO* SAY WHEN I *TELL* HIM?

LOLA THOUGHT OF *OTTO KEARNS.* SHE THOUGHT OF HOW HE'D COME TD THE HOTEL A LITTLE LESS THAN A MDNTH AGO, AND HOW HE'D ASKED..

I'D LIKE A *ROOM.* A *CHEAP* ONE IF YOU HAVE IT. I..I CAN'T *AFFORD* TOO MUCH

I HAVE A *NICE ROOM* ON THE *SECOND FLOOR REAR.* I'LL... LET YOU HAVE IT FOR... FOR... *SEVEN DOLLARS A WEEK..*

LOLA REMEMBERED HOW SHE'D *LIKED* OTTO RIGHT OFF. SHE'D ALWAYS GOTTEN *TEN* FOR THAT RDDM.. BUT SHE'D *LOOKED* AT HIM AND *WANTED* HIM TO *STAY*, SO BHE'D *REDUCED* THE RENT FOR HIM...

SEVEN? THAT *SOUNDS REASONABLE.* IS IT A *NICE* ROOM?

IT'S A *LOVELY* ROOM *COME ALONG.* I'LL *SHOW* IT TO YOU.

LOLA HAD *NEVER* LEFT HER DESK BEFORE TO SHOW A RDOM, BUT SHE'D FELT *GOOD* ABOUT OTTO RIGHT AWAY. SHE'D TAKEN HIM UP AND LINGERED THERE, EVEN AFTER HE'D AGREED TO TAKE IT AND HAD PAID HER. LOLA HAD NOT UNDERSTOOD HER FEELINGS AT THAT TIME. SHE'D NEVER *WANTED* A MAN BEFORE OTTO...

I USUALLY CHARGE A *DOLLAR A WEEK EXTRA* FOR *MAID SERVICE*, BUT...

I'LL DO MY *OWN CLEANING*, THANK YOU, MISS PEDERSON. *I DON'T MIND!*

SO OTTO HAD COME TO LIVE IN LOLA'S HDTEL. AND AS THE WEEKS WENT BY, HER FONDNESS FOR HIM HAD SWELLED TD A HUNGRY YEARNING. HE'D FED HER WITH SMILES AND WARM WORDS, THE TOUCH OF A HAND, BUT *NOTHING NORE...*

GOOD EVENING, OTTO. ER ..WHY DON'T YOU COME INTO MY *ROOM?* I'LL FIX SDME *TEA.* WE CAN *TALK*...

ANOTHER TIME, PERHAPS, LOLA I'M *VERY TIRED.* GOOD-NIGHT!

SHE HAD *TRIED* TO ENCOURAGE HIM WITH SYMPATHETIC ATTENTION, BUT OTTD'S NEEDS, WHATEVER THEY MIGHT HAVE BEEN, HAD NOT *INCLUDED* HER COMPANIONSHIP. AND HIS SEEMING *RELUCTANCE* TO BE *ALONE* WITH HER HAD ONLY SERVED AS *FUEL* FOR LOLA'S BURNING DESIRES...

PODR OTTO...WAKING UP AT THE CRACK OF DAWN AND RUSHING OUT WITH HIS SAMPLE CASE WHEN *MOST* MEN ARE WAITING FOR THEIR WIVES TO SERVE THEIR *BREAKFAST!*

IF I'M NOT *FIRST* ON THE SPOT WITH A *CUSTOMER*, I DON'T MAKE A *SALE*, LOLA!

OTTO HAD BEEN SUCH A *FOOL*, LOLA'D ALL BUT *ASKED* HIM TO MARRY HER, BUT IT'D GONE *COMPLETELY OVER HIS NEAD*...

DON'T YOU *SEE*, OTTO? I *OWN* THIS HOTEL. I COULD MAKE THINGS *EASY* FOR YOU, IF...

I'VE *THOUGHT* ABOUT THAT, LOLA! *WOULD YOU* WOULD YOU *CONSIDER* LETTING ME *SHARE MY ROOM* WITH *ANOTHER GENTLEMAN?* I COULD *USE* THE MONEY I'D SAVE SO *HICELY*...

LOLA REMEMBERED HOW SHE'D TOLD OTTO SHE'D THINK IT OVER ABOUT HIS SHARING A ROOM, BUT SHE HADN'T *LIKED* THE IDEA *AT ALL*. WITH ANOTHER MAN LIVING IN HIS ROOM, HE WOULDN'T BE *ALONE* ANYMORE. HER *CHANCES* WOULD BE EVEN *LESS* AND SO, WHEN THE PHONE RANG THIS MORNING...

YES. YES, *THIS* IS THE *GOTHAM HOTEL! WHAT?* RENT A *ROOM?* NO! WE'RE *ALL FILLED UP!* WHAT? YOU WORK AT *NIGHT?* YOU'D WANT IT DURING THE *DAY?* NO, I'M *SORRY*...

THE RASPING VOICE AT THE OTHER END OF THE PHONE HAD BEEN THE ANSWER TO LOLA'S DILEMMA. IF SHE WERE TO ALLOW OTTO TO SHARE A ROOM WITH SOMEONE WHO WORKED AT NIGHT, THERE WOULDN'T BE ANYONE AROUND IN THE EVENINGS TO CRAMP HER STYLE...

WAIT A MINUTE! IF I HAVE YOUR *ASSURANCE* THAT YOU'LL *ONLY* NEED THE ROOM DURING THE *DAY*.. THAT YOU'LL *LEAVE* BY *SIX AT NIGHT* AND NOT COME *BACK* TILL *AFTER SIX IN THE MORNING*, PERHAPS...

SO SHE'D TOLD THE HOARSE, BARELY INTELLIGENT VOICE TO COME OVER. THAT A ROOM WAS AVAILABLE ON THAT BASIS. AND WHILE SHE'D WAITED FOR HIM, SHE'D TURNED ON THE RADIO...

...ANOTHER *BODY OF A WOMAN* WAS FOUND EARLY THIS MORNING. THIS IS THE *LATEST VICTIM* OF THE HOMICIDAL MANIAC, WHOM THE PRESS HAS APPROPRIATELY DUBBED "*THE RIPPER*"...

...BUT LOLA'D BEEN IN A PRIVATE LITTLE WORLD OF HER OWN IMAGINATION, SO SHE'D ONLY HALF-HEARD THE HARROWING REPORT...

"*THE RIPPER*" ATTACKS WOMEN ON LONELY DESERTED STREETS AND *DECAPITATES* THEM, *CARRYING AWAY THEIR HEADS!* ALL CITIZENS ARE WARNED TO...

NO! SHE'D NOT THOUGHT MUCH OF THE RADIO REPORT. SHE'D BEEN THINKING OF HOW PLEASED OTTO WOULD BE WITH HER FOR MAKING THESE ARRANGEMENTS AND HOW SHE'D BE ABLE TO REDUCE HIS RENT EVEN MORE. AND THEN, SHE'D LOOKED UP TO SEE THE APE-LIKE FIGURE STANDING THERE, SUITCASE IN HAND...

GASP! YOU... YOU *STARTLED* ME! *YES?* WHAT CAN I... DO...? *OH!* YOU MUST BE THE ONE...

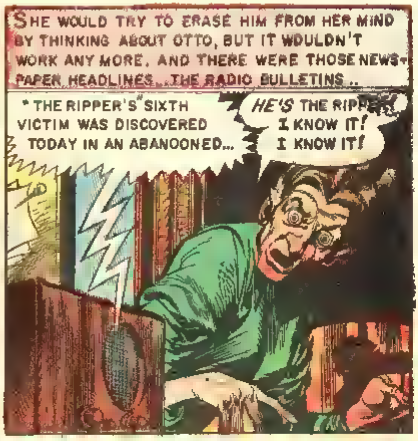
AND SHE'D INSTINCTIVELY ASSOCIATED THE RASPING BARELY INTELLIGIBLE VOICE ON THE PHONE WITH THE HIDEOUS CREATURE BEFORE HER. BUT SHE'D BEEN TOO FRIGHTENED TO REFUSE HIM THE ROOM. SO SHE'D HANDED HIM THE PEN NERVOUSLY AND TAKEN HIS MONEY AND DIRECTED HIM TO THE SECOND FLOOR REAR...TO OTTO'S ROOM...

DON'T FORGET! YOU *MUST BE OUT* BY *SIX* EVERY NIGHT!

LOLA WAS SHOCKED OUT OF HER REVERIE BY FOOTSTEPS ON THE OLD CREAKY HOTEL STAIRS. SHE LOOKED UP. HE WAS COMING DOWN AGAIN...
MAYBE... MAYBE HE DOESN'T LIKE THE ROOM! MAYBE..
HE SHUFFLED SILENTLY ACROSS THE LOBBY AND OUT THE DOOR, SUITCASE IN HAND...
MAYBE HE WON'T COME BACK! NO! HE HE PAID A WEEK IN ADVANCE! HE'LL BE BACK SOB..
LOLA WAITED PATIENTLY FOR OTTO'S RETURN THAT EVENING. WHEN HE FINALLY CAME IN, SHE RUSHED TO HIM WHIMPERING..
OH, OTTO! I DID SUCH A TERRIBLE THING! I RENTED YOUR ROOM TO SOMEONE ELSE FOR DURING THE DAY
WHY, THAT'S WONDERFUL, LOLA! THAT'S BETTER THAN SHARING THE ROOM...
BUT HE'S HORRIBLE! JUST HORRIBLE! HE'S THE UGLIEST CREATURE I'VE EVER SEEN! HE..HE LOOKS LIKE ..LIKE A...LIKE A MURDERER!
OH, COME, NOW, LOLA! LET'S NOT LET OUR IMAGINATION RUN AWAY WITH US. BESIDES ..
HE'D LOOKED AT HER WARMLY...ALMOST SUGGESTIVELY
THIS IS A MUCH HAPPIER ARRANGEMENT THAN SHARING A ROOM, LOLA. THIS WAY, I STILL HAVE MY PRIVACY IN THE EVENINGS! SO WE DON'T CARE WHAT HE LOOKS LIKE. DO WE?!
HERE! LET ME CARRY YOUR SAMPLE CASE UP FOR YOU, OTTO! YOU MUST BE TIRED! I CAN BRING YOU A CUP OF HOT TEA IF YOU LIKE. I
HE MOVED UP THE STAIRS, REBUFFING HER, ADDING TO THE BITTERNESS OF HER PASSION..
NO..THANK YOU! I CAN CARRY IT MYSELF! I WANT NOTHING! NOTHING BUT REST.. AND PRIVACY! GOOD-NIGHT, LOLA!
BUT.. I.. I.. GOOD-NIGHT, OTTO!
THAT NIGHT LOLA TOSSED AND TURNED, UNABLE TO SLEEP. SHE KEPT SEEING THAT HORRIBLE, HORRIBLE FACE, AND THEN SHE'D DRIVE THE SICKENING VISION FROM HER MIND BY THINKING ABOUT OTTO, AND HOW SHE WANTED HIM AND HOW IT WOULD BE IN HIS ARMS...
OH, OTTO! OTTO! I'VE THROWN MYSELF AT YOU! I MUST HAVE YOU! I NEED YOU. SOB..

IN THE DAYS THAT FOLLOWED, A GROWING UNEASINESS PLAGUED LOLA. THE GLIMPSES SHE CAUGHT OF HER HIDEOUS GUEST LEAVING EACH NIGHT FOR WORK PLAYED UPON HER MIND. SHE IMAGINED MEETING HIM ON THE BACK STAIRCASE, HIS GROTESQUE FACE LEERING AT HER, HIS GREAT WARPED BODY COMING CLOSER... CLOSER ..HIS HOT BREATH UPON HER THROAT... HIS HAIRY PAWS REACHING ..

SHE WOULD TRY TO ERASE HIM FROM HER MIND BY THINKING ABOUT OTTO, BUT IT WOULDN'T WORK ANY MORE. AND THERE WERE THOSE NEWSPAPER HEADLINES...THE RADIO BULLETINS ..



AGAIN AND AGAIN SHE RUSHED TO THE PHONE TO CALL THE POLICE, TO TELL THEM THAT THE MURDERER WAS UNDER HER ROOF...

SO LOLA DECIDED TO GET THE PROOF... TO FIND IT IN THE ROOM ON THE SECOND FLOOR. THAT EVENING, SHE WAITED FOR HER HIDEOUS GUEST TO LEAVE

THEN SHE LEFT HER DESK, TAKING THE PASSKEY, SHE TREMBLED AT EVERY STEP SHE TOOK UP THE WHINING STAIRS..

THE LONG WALK DOWN THE SECOND FLOOR CORRIDOR ONLY INCREASED THE AGONIZING TAUTNESS IN HER STOMACH. SHE HAD AN URGENT NEED TO GO DOWN TO HER ROOM. BUT SHE WENT ON, FINALLY REACHING THE DOOR. SHE INSERTED THE PASSKEY IN THE LOCK...TURNED IT... THE GRATING SOUND TENSING EVERY NERVE IN HER TORTURED BODY...

THE DOOR SWUNG OPEN. SHE STEPPED INSIDE, A CHILL SWEEPING OVER HER. THE ROOM WAS HEAVY WITH THE SMELL OF PERSPIRATION. SHE MOVED TO THE TWO CLOSETS... SWUNG OPEN THE ONE ON THE RIGHT...

SHE TURNED TO THE OTHER CLOSET SHE TRIED THE KNOB...

LOCKED!

SHE FITTED THE PASSKEY TO THE CLOSET DOOR... UNLOCKING IT. SHE FLUNG IT OPEN. A POWERFUL STENCH BURNED HER NOSTRILS...

IT WAS THE SMELL OF THAT MAN. THE SMELL OF DEATH. SHE PEERED IN. THE PROOF WAS THERE...

OH, MY GOD...

THE HEADS. SIX STARING HEADS GRINNED AT HER—HANGING GROTESQUELY FROM THE CLOTHES HOOKS INSIDE THE CLOSET. LOLA SCREAMED

EEEAAK!

SHE REMEMBERED SLAMMING THE CLOSET DOOR. THEN EVERYTHING WENT BLACK. WHEN SHE CAME TO, HE WAS BENDING OVER HER...

OTTO...GASP.

WHAT *IS* IT, LOLA? WHAT *HAPPENED?* I FOUND YOU ON THE FLOOR. YOU MUST HAVE FAINTED.

SHE THREW HER ARMS AROUND HIM, SOBBING HYSTERICALLY...

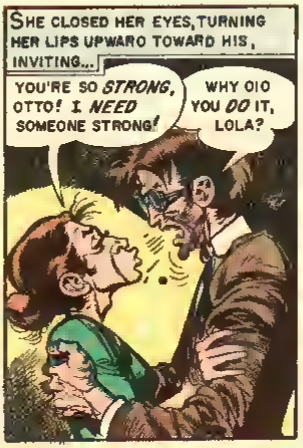
HE'S THE ONE, OTTO! THAT *HIDEOUS CREATURE...* HE'S *"THE RIPPER"!*

THERE WAS COMFORT AND REASSURANCE IN OTTO'S VOICE AND IN THE FEEL OF HIS BODY AGAINST HERS. HE LOOKED CONCERNED, AND LOLA FELT SAFE IN HIS STRONG ARMS...

THE ONE I SHARE THE *ROOM* WITH? DON'T BE *SILLY,* LOLA. YOU'VE BEEN *READING* TOO MUCH!

I *SAW,* OTTO! IN THE *CLOSET! I SAW THE HEADS!*

HE SMILED DOWN AT HER COLDLY...
IT WAS A BAD NIGHT FOR BUSINESS, LOLA. NOT A CUSTOMER. HOW LUCKY FOR ME I CAME BACK EARLY...
LUCKY FOR ME, OTTO! OH, HOLD ME.

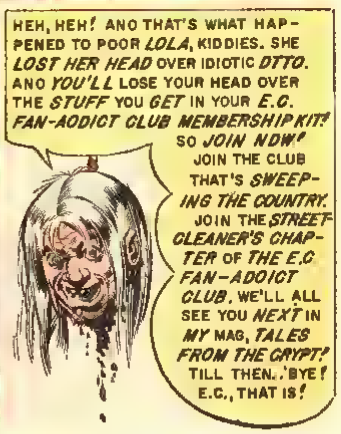

SHE CLOSED HER EYES, TURNING HER LIPS UPWARD TOWARD HIS, INVITING...
YOU'RE SO STRONG, OTTO! I NEED SOMEONE STRONG!
WHY DID YOU DO IT, LOLA?

SHE SHIVERED, WAITING. HE DID NOT KISS HER. SHE OPENED HER EYES. HIS FACE.. HIS FACE WAS CHANGING...
OTTO!
WHY DID YOU COME UP HERE, LOLA? WHY?

HE HELD HER IN A VICE-LIKE GRIP. HIS FEATURES GREW UGLY, VILE, EVIL. HE DREW FORTH THE KNIFE...
OTTO! MY GOD!
I DIDN'T WANT IT TO BE THIS WAY, LOLA! YOU WERE GOOD TO ME! I DIDN'T WANT TO HAVE TO KILL YOU!

THE SCALPEL-EDGE OF THE BUTCHER KNIFE WAS HOT ON LOLA'S NECK. SHE TRIED TO SCREAM BUT NO SOUND CAME OUT.. ONLY A CHOKING GURGLE...
WHY DID YOU HAVE TO SPOIL IT, LOLA? WHY DID YOU HAVE TO LOOK IN THE CLOSET?

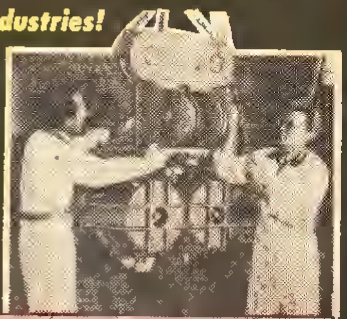
THERE WAS A FLUID RED HAZE, AND THROUGH IT LOLA SAW THAT TWO MEN WERE ONE AND THE SAME, THEN THE BLACKNESS...
WHY DID YOU HAVE TO FIND MY HEADS, LOLA?
BUT LOLA COULD NO LONGER HEAR THE ANIMAL GRUNT OF HIS BREATHING. SHE COULD NOT SMELL THE SICKLY ODOR OF DEATH...


HEH, HEH! AND THAT'S WHAT HAPPENED TO POOR LOLA, KIDDIES. SHE LOST HER HEAD OVER IDIOTIC OTTO. AND YOU'LL LOSE YOUR HEAD OVER THE STUFF YOU GET IN YOUR E.C. FAN-ADDICT CLUB MEMBERSHIP KIT! SO JOIN NOW! JOIN THE CLUB THAT'S SWEEPING THE COUNTRY. JOIN THE STREET-CLEANER'S CHAPTER OF THE E.C FAN-ADDICT CLUB. WE'LL ALL SEE YOU NEXT IN MY MAG, TALES FROM THE CRYPT! TILL THEN, BYE! E.C., THAT IS!

GET SHOP-METHOD HOME TRAINING

for SUCCESS in Today's Top Industries!

SEND COUPON TODAY for FREE BOOK and COMPLETE SAMPLE LESSON!



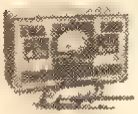
RADIO-TELEVISION & ELECTRONICS OR AUTOMOTIVE-DIESEL & ALLIED MECHANICS

Like a business of your own — or a good job with a big firm — and get paid for what you know? Shop-Method Home Training in Radio, Television, Electronics will bring you the job ... money ... you've always wanted. 105 *million* Radios, 3160 stations — 16 *million* TV sets, over 100 TV stations — many more, now. Govt. restrictions are off. Defense industries want trained men for interesting, good pay jobs. Get into this opportunity-making industry — advance fast. Find out how — mail coupon TODAY!

Want to be your own boss — or get into booming industries? 8 *million* older cars need big profitable services and repairs. Farm machinery is going Diesel. Defense industry begs for more and more trained mechanics for high-pay jobs. National Schools Shop-Method Home Training prepares you for all Automotive, Diesel, Allied Mechanics opportunities. Helps you get the security, good pay you've always wanted. Send coupon for your Free Book and Sample Lesson now!

I GIVE YOU STANDARD PARTS! INCLUDING TUBES! —they are yours to keep. You actually learn by doing, build generators, receivers, a big Super-Het radio.

THIS PROFESSIONAL FACTORY-MADE MULTI-TESTER IS YOURS! Valuable equipment every Radio-TV man needs. Yours to keep!



BOTH RESIDENT AND HOME STUDY COURSES OFFERED!

LET NATIONAL SCHOOLS of Los Angeles, California, a Resident Trade School for almost 50 years, train you at home for today's unlimited opportunities. Pick your industry—mail coupon below now!

EARN EXTRA MONEY WHILE YOU LEARN! I show you how to earn extra money *while learning!* Many men have paid for their entire course in this way. You can, too. Remember: Shop-Method Home Training covers *every phase* of the industry — in an interesting step-by-step way. Why wait — take the first step to success—mail the coupon today!

DRAFT AGE? Training helps you get the service branch you want, advance fast. That means higher pay and grade, more prestige — right away! Don't take a chance—mail coupon *now!*

These courses also offered in Spanish and Portuguese

I GIVE YOU THE TOOLS OF YOUR TRADE! Big professional-quality kit of tools of your trade — and all-metal tool box. All yours to keep — part of your course. They help make your training more practical — start you off right!

NATIONAL SCHOOLS

Technical Trade Training Since 1905

LOS ANGELES 37, CALIFORNIA

In Canada: 811 West Hastings Street, Vancouver, B. C.

FREE! RADIO-TV BOOK & LESSON!

FREE! AUTO-DIESEL BOOK & LESSON!

DON'T PUT IT OFF GET THE BIG SALARY YOU'VE ALWAYS WANTED!

GET FACTS FASTEST! MAIL TO OFFICE NEAREST YOU!

(mail in envelope or paste on postal card)

NATIONAL SCHOOLS, Dept 1P-24

4000 S. Figueroa Street, Los Angeles 37, Calif. or **323 West Polk Street, Chicago 7, Ill.**

Please rush *Free* Book & Sample Lesson checked below. No obligation, no salesman will call.

☐ *"My Future in Radio-Television & Electronics"*

☐ *"My Future in Automotive Diesel & Allied Mechanics"*

NAME _____ BIRTHDAY _____ 19____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ ZONE _____ STATE _____

☐ Check here if interested in Resident School Training at Los Angeles

VETERANS: Give Date of Discharge _____

Send for my FREE Outfit and start a *Quick-Cash* spare time Shoe Business!

Just 2 Sales a Day Brings You up to $217 EXTRA a Month!

We Show You How To Do It!

Now, without spending one cent, you can start a spare-time Shoe Business that brings in exciting cash profits every month! My powerful Selling Outfit makes it ***easy.*** Just take 2 orders a day for our fine, Nationally-Advertised shoes and you earn up to **$217.50 *extra*** a month! You also get chances to win valuable free prizes.

EVERYBODY Wears Shoes!

Here's the perfect business, because EVERYONE you know can be a customer! Just show friends, relatives, neighbors, people where you work, how Mason Velvet-eez Air Cushion shoes let them "Walk on Air" That's REAL comfort!

As the Mason Shoe Counselor you give people the EXACT style, size and width they order because you draw on our giant stock of 200,000 pairs in sizes 2½ to 15, widths AAAA to EEEE Customers choose from over 160 different styles—dress, sport and work styles for men and women, including air-cooled Nylon Mesh shoes, also work shoes with special built-in comfort and safety features. You'll be EXCITED the way people stuff steady cash profits in your pocket for extra-comfortable Mason shoes!

MASON SHOE MFG. CO.
DEPT. MA-227, CHIPPEWA FALLS, WIS.

Mason Shoes Can Be Bought Only From YOU!

Because we do not sell Mason Velvet-eez shoes in stores, people must buy these TV-advertised shoes with the famed Good Housekeeping Seal ONLY FROM YOU — and ***keep*** buying from you! ★ Right now, during our Golden Anniversary year, is the perfect time to get started. Just mail the coupon and I'll rush your money-making FREE Starting Outfit The Professional Sample Outfit pictured above is sent to qualified men without a penny's cost! Send ***today*** and start earning exciting cash profits RIGHT AWAY!

RUSH FOR FREE OUTFIT!

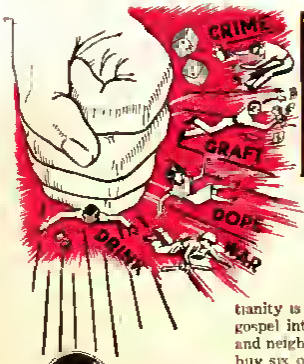
MR. NED MASEN
MASON SHOE MFG. CO., Dept. MA-227
Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin

Please rush my 50th Anniversary FREE Selling Outfit so I can start making up to $217 EXTRA a month and **more** RIGHT AWAY!

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

TOWN _____ STATE _____



BOYS, GIRLS, MEN, WOMEN!

The World Is On FIRE

Serve The LORD and You Can Have These Prizes!

We will send you the wonderful prizes pictured on this page . . . or dozens of others, such as jewelry, radium dial wrist watches, tableware, tools, U-Make-It kits, leather kits, sewing kits, electric clocks, pressure cookers, scout equipment, model airplanes, and many others . . . all WITHOUT ONE PENNY OF COST. Crime, sin, graft, wars are the greatest they have ever been. Our leaders say a reawakening of Christianity is needed to save us. You can do your share by spreading the gospel into every home in your community. Merely show your friends and neighbors inspiring, beautiful Religious Wall Motto plaques. Many buy six or more to hang in every room. An amazing value, only 35¢ . . . sell on sight. Secure big cash commissions or exciting prizes for selling few as **one set** of 24 Mottos. Big Prize catalog sent **Free!** Serve the LORD and earn prizes you want.

YOU CAN MAKE MONEY TOO!

WRIST WATCHES FOR BOYS AND GIRLS

ORY ORGLOS FLASH CAMLOA

BARBY RAYLO FISHING KIT

VARSITY SET

REB RYDER CARBINE

BOYS' OR GIRLS' BICYCLE

RADIUM DIAL POCKET WATCH

TEXAN JR GUITAR

ROY ROGERS BINOCULARS

ELECTRONIC TWO-WAY WALKIE-TALKIE

ALOR UKELELE WITH ARTHUR GODFOLY PLAYER

RADIO RECEIVER SET FOR OUTDOOR

ARCHERY SET

FOOTBALL

WALKING DOLL

HUNTING KNIFE AND AX

JOE DI MAGGIO BASEBALL SET

TWO GUN HOLSTER SET

BIG SIZE BASKET BALL AND RING

ORY ORGANS AND BALL EVANS LAMP

RICO TRACY CAMERA

CHEMISTRY SET

BOYS' SHOULDER STRAP BAG

ROLLER SKATES

WRITE ZIPPED DOLL

TYPEWRITER

WOODBURNING SET

TABLE TENNIS SET

HERE'S HOW YOU GET YOUR PRIZES

Rush your name and address on coupon and we ship AT ONCE! REPAID your first set of 24 big size, 9x11, richly decorated Mottos **On Trust.** When you have sold the 24 Mottos, send the $8.40 you have collected and you can secure your choice of many wonderful prizes. If you prefer to EARN MONEY, send $4.00 and keep $2.40. Hurry, send TODAY for 24 Mottos ON TRUST and big PRIZE CATALOG FREE.

The FUNmen, Dept. D-161, 4548 N. Clark St., Chicago 40, Ill. **FREE BIG PRIZE CATALOG**

Please rush to me on credit 24 Religious Wall Mottos to sell at 35¢ each. Also include big Prize Catalog *Free*. I will remit amount asked within 30 days, select a prize or keep cash commission as explained under description of prize in BIG PRIZE CATALOG. PRINT BELOW.

NAME _____ AGE _____

STREET or R F D _____

TOWN _____ ZONE _____ STATE _____

Save 3 cent filling in, pasting and mailing this coupon on a 1¢ Postcard today.

FREE! MEMBERSHIP *in the* FUNman's Fun Club

Just mail coupon below now and we'll send you 24 Religious Mottos ON CREDIT. Easy to sell—you get valuable prizes. EXTRA! If you sell mottos and send payment within 15 days you receive FREE Membership in the FUNman's Fun Club. A membership card, certificate, giant packet of fun materials all yours PLUS extra surprises!

SEND NO MONEY... *We Trust You*